

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER.



F. B. SANFORD.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

BV 4529
Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf 83

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





THE

Christian Mother.

A MANUAL

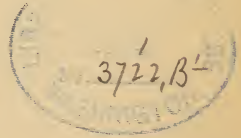
OF

TEXTS OF HOLY WRIT,

FOR THE

ASSISTANCE, GUIDANCE, AND COMFORT OF THE
CHRISTIAN WIFE AND MOTHER.

By ^{Miss} E. B. Sanford.



The Church Press: A

M. H. MALLORY & CO., HARTFORD, CONN.

1871.

BV4529
53

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by
M. H. MALLORY & CO.,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

M. H. MALLORY & CO.,
PRINTERS AND ELECTROTYPERS,
HARTFORD, CONN.

DEDICATION.

To her Christian sisters, placed, like herself, in the responsible position of a Mother in the Israel of God, this humble work is affectionately offered, by one who, having been called from earliest womanhood to the care and instruction of little ones, and being also surrounded with a large family of her own, has deeply felt the need of the guiding councils and cheering promises so fully vouchsafed in the good Word of God.

CONTENTS.

SECTION I.—Self-Consecration,	-	-	-	9
II.—Duty of a Wife,	-	-	-	47
III.—Household Cares,-	-	-	-	71
IV.—Birth and Baptism of Children,	-	-	-	107
V.—Religious Training of Children,	-	-	-	133
VI.—Seasons of Peril and Trial,	-	-	-	233
VII.—Bereavement,	-	-	-	255

SECTION I.

Self-Consecration.

Self-Consecration.

“Wrestle, my soul, and strive, and pray,
Thyself to this true love to raise ;
That thus thou may'st from day to day
Bring forth new fruit to His great praise.”

I.

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord.”

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.”

“As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Luke, i. 38. I. Cor. vi. 19, 20. Josh. xxiv. 15.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord ! This utterance of the holiest of mothers breathes the very spirit of perfect self-devotion with which we each should aim to regard our life, with its duties, its hopes, its cares, and its trials.

As for me and mine, we will serve the Lord. Such should be our earnest purpose ; and our motive, this : the constraining love of Christ ; the remembrance that we are “not our own.”

Therefore, fervently and continually, let the solemn vow of self-dedication be renewed.
“Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord,

ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto Thee!"

II.

"Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God."

"Abide in Me; . . . without Me ye can do nothing."

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Josh. xxiv. 19. John, xv. 4, 5. Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Amid the glow of fervent feeling with which every Christian will look forward to a life of active labor for Christ, and with which Christian parents, also, must regard the young lives given into their hands, to be influenced, guided, and consecrated, together with their own, to that blessed service, is there not ever danger lest we lose sight of or obscure the truth, that our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption, and that of the souls "bound up" with ours, is in Christ alone? Our life can only be well-pleasing unto God as it is "hid with Christ"; it is only as living branches of the True Vine that we can bring forth acceptable fruit.

Let us take heed, then, that we abide in Him, by an humble, earnest faith, and that we seek,

by all and every means of grace which Himself has appointed, that He abide in us. For, apart from Him, we can do nothing.

III.

“We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.”

“I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.”

“Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”

Eph. ii. 10. *John*, xv. 16. *I. Cor.* vii. 24.

We firmly believe in that all-ruling Providence which disposes the mighty spheres in their orbits, and numbers also the hairs of our heads. We trust that we are members in particular of the body of Him who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, that we should bring forth abundantly the fruit of good works, to the glory of God our Father.

How, then, can we fail to believe, and to derive comfort from the belief, that our lot in life—the station in which we find ourselves placed—is that in which we can best adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; that the work “which lies nearest us,” which our hand findeth to do, is

that, by the faithful performance of which, we can most effectually serve and glorify the Lord.

“Thou cam’st not to thy place by accident,
It is the very place God meant for *thee*.”

And this place was assigned to us—this our life-work was ordained—by One who perfectly knew our nature and our powers, our weaknesses and our needs, and it was ordained thus in infinite wisdom and mercy.

“How important,” to use the language of a well-known writer, “is the truth we express in naming our work in this world *our vocation*, or *our calling*. What a calming, elevating, solemnizing view of the tasks which we find ourselves set in this world to do, this word would give us, if we did but realize it to the full.

“We did not come to our work by accident; we did not choose it for ourselves, but, under much which may wear the appearance of accident and self-choosing, came to it by God’s leading and appointment.” What a help is this thought to enable us justly to appreciate the dignity of our work. What an assistance in calming unsettled thoughts and desires. What a source of confidence, when we are tempted to

lose heart, and to doubt whether we shall be able to carry through our work with any blessing or profit to ourselves or others. It is our calling; and He who called us to it will fit us for it, and strengthen us in it."

IV.

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

"Walk before Me, and be thou perfect."

"What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

I. Thess. iv. 3. Gen. xvii. 1. Mic. vi. 8.

We gather yet more clearly from these and kindred passages that it is possible for us, by Divine help, to attain to the highest state of holiness and acceptance with God, in that very condition of life to which we find ourselves called by His Providence. He who wills our sanctification, who bids us show forth in our daily life and conversation what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, would surely not place us in any position in which it should be impossible for us thus to glorify Him.

Well was it said, by one of the early teachers of the Church, "The most perfect man is he who, in the midst of the charges, and cares, and

relations of life and home, yet attends upon the Lord without distraction." Never, then, let us suffer ourselves to imagine that in any other situation we could render our God more acceptable service, or could better work out our own salvation.

"We need not bid for cloistered cell,
Our neighbor, or our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.

"The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves—a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

V.

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."

"Pray without ceasing."

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

Col. iii. 3. I. Thess. v. 17. Col. iv. 2.

We need these sacred words, to remind us again and again of our only source of life and strength. Most true it is that God hath called us to serve Him in the daily duties of our lot, yet no less true that it is impossible for us thus to please Him unless we wait on our God continually, and thus renew our strength.

And the more busy our life, the more pressing

our employments; the more absorbing our anxieties, the greater need is there that we hold fast our precious privileges of devotion.

“Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong?
That we are ever overborne by care,
That we should ever dull and heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with *us* is prayer:
And joy, and strength, and comfort are with Thee?”

“The life of our Lord,” writes a divine, “exhibits the most perfect example of constant employments. Hardly any man’s life was ever yet so broken in upon, and taken from him, by labor and care, and the importunity of others, as His; and yet He is to us the most perfect example of devotion.

“That which we plead as excuse was the very cause why He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. In which He teaches us that whatever else we forego, we may not forego our prayers; whatever else is at our will to give up, this is not; however necessary we may think other things, this is the thing needful above all.”

VI.

“Our conversation is in heaven.”

“I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.”

“Enoch walked with God.”

Phil. iii. 20. *Ps.* xvi. 8. *Gen.* v. 22.

These words, and many passages of like spirit, imply that it is not enough that at stated seasons, in our morning and evening devotions, at the table of the Lord, and in His house of prayer, we seek His face, but we are to walk with God, to have our fellowship with Him, continuing *instant* in prayer.

Perhaps this seems to us a hard saying. We may find it difficult to reconcile the thought of our daily, hourly routine with that of an abiding consciousness of God's presence—of keeping up upon the heart-altar the perpetual fire.

But to take a more familiar view of the matter. If we have a near and dear earthly friend abiding with us—tarrying beneath our roof—although we must still move on in the unvarying round of urgent duties, yet, in how many ways, by so arranging our occupations as to secure as much as possible of converse with the loved one, and even in our busiest hours, by a

look, a smile, a few affectionate words in passing, do we evince our loving interest, our delight in, and appreciation of, that friend's society.

Think thus of the "Friend above all others," of whom, in our hearts, we must say,

"*I need Thy presence every passing hour.*"

Depending upon His constant care, knowing that in Him we live, and move, and have our being, conscious that He is "about our path and about our bed," shall we not lift up our hearts to Him continually, in loving recognition of His presence? Shall we not esteem it a most gracious privilege that we may thus, in heart, commune with Him at all times? That, by the heavenward thought, when our hands are occupied with labor, by the prayerful ejaculation at the moment of temptation and disturbance, by the low-breathed hymn which lulls an infant to repose, we may offer homage to our God and King—an homage acceptable unto Him as that which arises from the secluded oratory or the vaulted temple.

VII.

"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

"Ye serve the Lord Christ."

"As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

Col. iii. 17. *Col.* iii. 24. *Eph.* vi. 6.

How truly inspiring are these words, throwing, as they do, a ray of heavenly brightness upon the most obscure, the most dreary or toilsome post occupied by a servant of Christ!

Whatever our hand findeth to do, in the way of duty, we may do it in the name of the Lord—we may do it as a service unto Him.

If we incline to ask how we may dare regard our petty employment of the hour as the Lord's work, let us consider how the providence of God extends to the smallest concerns of His creatures.

He who paused beside the child whom His almighty word had recalled to life, to command that something be given her to eat; He who clothes the grass of the field with beauty, and numbers the hairs of our heads, is not unobservant of those engaged in the lowlier duties of life, nor unmindful whether these be fulfilled in

the grovelling spirit of the world, or in His name, and to His glory.

VIII.

"If, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

"No servant can serve two masters...ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

"This one thing I do."

Matt. vi. 22. *Luke*, xvi. 13. *Phil.* iii. 13.

"My yoke is easy," saith the Master. "Great peace have they," declares the Psalmist, "who love Thy law."

How is it, then, that we do so fail of realizing this peace? that we are so often perplexed and anxious? that we are chafed by the yoke and burden so gently laid upon us? Have we not the key to our difficulty in the texts just quoted?

Let us examine ourselves whether we be swayed, in our intercourse with society, by the rule of fashion; by the dictates of worldly prudence in the management of our affairs; by the impulses of natural feeling in our maternal duties; or, by self-indulgence, the love of the praise of men, or the claims of an earthly idol. If either of these, or each in turn, become our most

powerful motive, causing us to swerve from our one single purpose, the "one thing" which we profess to do, must we not expect dimness instead of light, confusion instead of the promised peace?

"God crowneth no divided heart,
Oh, hallow to Him all thy life!"

The "closer our walk" with God, the "purer the light" which will illumine our way. The more steadfast our devotion to Christ, the more perfect peace shall we enjoy. The purer our aim to live to His service, the more clear and free from perplexities will our path become. Pray we, then, most earnestly, for grace to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

IX.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

"As the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God."

"Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto Thee!"

Acts, ix. 6. *Ps.* cxxiii. 2. *Ps.* cxliii. 8.

"Leave God to order all thy ways,
And trust in Him, whate'er betide."

We have chosen God as our Master; we have

given ourselves up to serve Him in the way that He shall appoint; we desire that His will may be done in us, that He may be glorified in us—*then* have we done our part—the ordering of our work is His. We have no call for anxiety as to the result, nor need we be disturbed and harassed by seeming interruptions and hindrances, for these are but Providential manifestations of His will concerning us. We work not for ourselves, but for the Master, who sees the whole vast field and appoints each servant, hour by hour, his part in the accomplishment of His mighty purposes. The work is His, and surely our short-sighted wisdom cannot judge of the best manner of performing it.

As then, a well-trained servant accepts the duties hourly allotted to him, not murmuring, although his labors in one direction be interrupted by some new expression of his lord's will; not venturing to question orders and arrangements, the purpose of which may yet be beyond his comprehension; concerning himself only in the faithful performance of each task assigned to him; *so* let us serve our Lord!

X.

"I am Thy servant, give me understanding."

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost. . . . He shall teach you all things."

"The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way."

Ps. cxix. 125. John, xiv. 26. Ps. xxv. 9.

But, it may be said, the way of duty is not always clearly apparent; often it is hard to decide what is right and best to do, under existing circumstances; often we are drawn hither and thither by what seem to us duties. How are we then to judge, or, having judged and acted, how shall we know that we are doing the will of God—that which is pleasing in His sight?

In reply, let us ask, Do we believe in the Holy Ghost? And was it not expressly said by the Master, "He will guide you"?

Having, then, first faithfully examined our hearts, whether we do humbly seek to know, and supremely desire to do, the Lord's will, let us cast our care upon Him, beseeching Him that He will "grant us by His good Spirit to have *a right judgment* in all things;" that He will be to us "a Spirit of counsel in all difficulties, and direction in all doubts, a Spirit of wisdom, and

conduct, and discretion ; ” “ that we may both perceive and know what things we ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to perform the same.”

Shall we not then believe that He will thus guide us ? That “ the steps ” which we take, thus trusting in His promised grace, *are* “ ordered by the Lord ” ?

XI.

“ Go thou thy way until the end be.”

“ I will bring the blind by a way that they know not ; I will lead them in paths that they have not known ; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.”

“ Commit thy way unto the Lord : trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.”

Dan. xiii. 13. *Isa.* xlii. 16. *Ps.* xxxvii. 5.

When we are conscious of having thus prayerfully sought for guidance, in any emergency or difficulty, coming also to the light of God’s Word, and acting then according to our sense of duty, we are not to vex ourselves with lamenting the decision, or action, however ill-judged it may appear from the results. We cannot see all the results ; and we are to trust all with Him whom we have humbly endeavored to serve, and

comfort ourselves with the knowledge that He is able to "make all things work together for good."

But, in thus asking Divine light upon the path of duty, we are not to expect too much, to seek to look too far forward upon the dim uncertain road.

It may be that but one step—the duty of one moment shall be apparent, as when, by the sea, the Israelites were commanded to go forward.

Let us obediently take that step ; and, watching, we shall see the next, and the next revealed, marked by the footprints, and cheered by the call of Him who, when He putteth forth His own sheep, goeth before, and thus leadeth them, though by a way which they know not, unto their eternal rest.

XII.

"If the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

"Take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine."

"Thou shalt keep therefore His statutes, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee."

Rom. xi. 16. I. Tim. iv. 16. Deut. iv. 40.

Vast as is the importance of this subject of self-consecration, considered with reference to

each human soul, however isolated, how greatly does it seem to be enhanced, when we reflect upon the atmosphere of young life which surrounds us who are parents, pressing in upon us as the plastic clay to the seal, and as surely receiving the impress of our character and actions.

Let the deep, yearning solicitude for our precious offspring, of which our hearts are conscious, move us solemnly to consider the nature of this, our daily, hourly influence.

It will be in vain that we teach, warn, and exhort, if our children do not behold in us a living exemplification of those teachings. We must walk by the same rule which we hold up for their guidance; we must *be ourselves*—what we desire they may become.

That the parental relation was designed by God to be thus a powerful instrument in the salvation of the young, cannot be doubted. Children are imitative beings, and God has made them so. Happy are those parents who can say to their trusting little ones—"Be ye followers of us, as we also are of Christ"—"Walk so as ye have us for an example."

Going thus in the heavenward way, and guiding our children, we may rest in the confidence that they will follow in our steps, and that we shall be enabled with joy to exclaim—"Here am I, and the children Thou hast given me."

Failing of this close walk with God, and in proportion as we fail of it, we do fearfully mislead and peril the souls committed to our guidance.

XIII.

"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

"Let your conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ."

"Be thou an example . . . in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

II. Pet. iii. 11. *Phil.* i. 27. *I. Tim.* iv. 12.

The inspired command to children—"Obey your parents in the Lord"—"Honor thy father and mother"—will, if we reflect upon it, deepen our sense of the responsibility of our position as parents. As has been well said—"The Fifth Commandment indicates the Divine purpose that parents should stand between the child and God, and thus lead him heavenwards." The little one's first idea of his Heavenly Father's

character will be colored by his experience of an earthly parent's care and love; his first impressions of the teachings of Christ must be derived from the illustration of those principles afforded him by the parents' example.

The child is taught to look up to his parents, to honor and obey them, long before he can comprehend the idea of an unseen God. During this tender period, especially, the parent is to him the representative of God—of the Saviour.

If, then, the discipline he receives, the example which he unconsciously follows, the obedience exacted of him, are in accordance with the mind and will of God, as it gradually unfolds itself to his understanding—if he perceives that in obeying his parents he obeys the Lord—the effect must be most happy. But who shall answer for the consequences in the heart and life of the child, if in honoring his parents, he has learned to dishonor God.

XIV.

“The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?”

“Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents.”

“Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God ! ”

Gen. xxxvii. 30. *Jer.* ii. 34. *Ps.* li. 14.

Oh, parent, who in your devotion to your idolized children, deem no sacrifice too great, no toils too severe which may secure their advancement and happiness, pause and ponder the path of your feet, in which they are too surely following, and see to it, that in the end you be not found “verily guilty” of the souls of those dearer to you than your own life.

What misery is in this thought. Yet how should it come home to each one of us who is not consciously striving to lead the life of a child of God.

For, as saith the holy Bishop Taylor—“Between parents and their children there is so great a society of nature and of manners, of blessing and cursing, that an evil parent cannot perish in a single death.

“And,” he continues, “holy parents never eat their meal of blessing alone, but they make the room shine like the fire of a holy sacrifice ; and a father’s or a mother’s piety makes all the house festival and full of joy, from generation to generation.”

XV.

"Ahaziah walked in the way of his mother."

"As is the mother, so is her daughter."

"Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?"

I. Kings, xxii. 52. *Ezek.* xvi. 44. *II. Kings*, iv. 26.

We have spoken, hitherto, of parental influence in terms which might apply equally to either parent; we have now to make a closer application of this subject to ourselves as *mothers*.

Who can doubt that the moulding of the child's character, in the majority of instances, is chiefly the work of the mother? It is, indeed, most desirable that the influence of both parents should be in unison, and that their united example should be the guide of their children's tender years. And we may be able to recall many instances in which the firm, consistent piety of an honored father has triumphed over the most pernicious example in the mother, in swaying the lives of children.

Yet, to be convinced that the maternal influence must be, in the generality of cases, the more potent, we have only to reflect that during the first, and the most impressible years of

infancy, the child is, almost exclusively, in the mother's hands. The avenues to that young and tender heart are in her keeping; the seeds which are sown in its virgin soil are mostly of her planting, and, though they may be the seed of tares, such as the enemy would delight to implant, they will prove hard indeed to eradicate.

"Tell me about his mother," Napoleon was wont to say, in forming his judgment of a person's character—"The fate of a child is always the work of his mother."

Truly, a most sacred trust is ours—a responsibility which we can delegate to no other.

Then let us hold this trust for God—let us wield this power for Him.

In the words of another, let us "Come out of our closets to mould and fashion character for God. This is our appropriate work; the task is too delicate and the responsibility too grave for any other voice or hand than that of a mother, consecrated by the power of true religion."

XVI.

"The unfeigned faith which is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice."

"None of us liveth to himself."

“For their sakes I sanctify Myself.”

II. Tim. i. 5. Rom. xiv. 7. John, xvii. 19.

While verse after verse of Holy Writ crowds upon our thoughts, bearing upon this solemn theme, it cannot be deemed amiss to dwell yet longer upon it; and with the texts just cited, we must give space to these earnest words of one who knows how to speak to the heart of a mother :

“You cannot be too deeply impressed with the thought that the Holy Spirit may be most surely expected to bless your children in connection with yourselves. Then be careful of yourselves. Keep yourselves pure ; keep yourselves patient ; keep yourselves calm, meek, gentle ; keep yourselves (may God help you to do so) in that state in which you wish your children to be.

“You have not failed to observe that mystery of your physical constitution, whereby anything in the least degree noxious in your diet imparts its deleterious influence to the natural food of your infant, and shows its effect so soon upon its delicate system. Hardly less susceptible are your children’s minds. With but little less certainty do they imbibe an evil influence from

whatever affects your spirit unfavorably. Then keep your hearts in a wholesome state. Guard yourselves from all evil tempers for your children's sake. Try to be, and pray to be, in spirit and behavior, what you would have them. It is most likely that they will be mainly what you are.

"I know how heavily this thought may oppress you, but cast the burden of it on God. Take comfort and courage from His offered help. He can fit you for your work. He will, if you truly desire it. What else can He be *more* willing to do for you?"

XVII.

"Behold, thou knowest His will and approvest the things that are more excellent, . . . and art . . . a teacher of babes: . . . thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?"

"They say and do not."

"I said, I will take heed unto my ways."

Rom. ii. 18-23. Matt. xxiii. 3. Ps. xxxix. 1.

We have already in these pages dwelt upon Christian consistency—the one single aim to serve the Lord in all things—as affecting our own peace of mind, our comfort in God's ser-

vice. Let us for a moment readvert to this point as it concerns our children.

We should but reiterate what has already been said and enforced from Scripture, were we to enlarge here upon the importance to children of an example of consistent piety—of beholding the Gospel rule of faith and obedience simply and sincerely acted upon in matters of every-day life.

Now, in nine cases out of ten, it is the mother—the Christian mother—upon whom it especially devolves to exhibit this beauty of holiness, the oneness of belief and practice, before the eyes of her children.

As has been truly remarked, “It is difficult for these young, though acute, observers, to comprehend the principles which regulate their father’s political opinions—his vote in the Senate; his conduct in commercial relations—but they can see, yes, and they can estimate and imitate the moral principles of the mother in her management of themselves, her treatment of her domestics, and the thousand petty details of the interior.”

If, then, the mother walk, in these daily rela-

tions, "as seeing Him who is invisible," how shall it be but the child's heart will feel the truth—"Thou God seest me"? If the mother "seek first God's kingdom and righteousness," shall not the child's heart be impressed with the reality of things eternal—the value of heavenly treasure? If the mother's conduct speak constantly of that "Charity which suffereth long and is kind," shall not the child more easily comprehend the precepts of a loving Saviour?

And on the other hand, if unhallowed motives sway the mother's course, either the child's perceptions of Christian duty will be blunted, or his religious faith and trust must receive a shock.

Oh, let us then fear, "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," and we thus place a stumbling-block in the heavenward path of our beloved children.

XVIII.

"Is there any secret thing with thee?"

"Search me, O God, and know my heart, . . . and see if there be any wicked way in me."

“Cast the beam out of thine own eye.”

Job, xv. 11. *Ps.* cxxxix. 23. *Matt.* vii. 5.

It may be that these words shall meet the eye of some mother who, while conscious of heart-felt desires and efforts for the salvation of her children, is yet grieved to the heart by the indifference of those children to religious truth and duty.

If such anxiety be ours, let the serious consideration of the subject upon which we have been dwelling, send us to our closets, into the presence of the Searcher of hearts, there to examine ourselves if there be not some sinful purpose, some unchecked temper, some besetting fault, which is marring the symmetry of our Christian example, and hindering the effect of our instructions and prayers.

XIX.

“Save the son of thine handmaid.”

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

“The Lord is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous.”

Ps. lxxxvi. 16. *James*, v. 16. *Prov.* xv. 29.

While we dwell strongly upon the almost unlimited influence of a consistently pious exam-

ple upon the character of our precious children, let us not forget that other equally mighty instrumentality which is, or may be, within our grasp—the prayers of the faithful.

Surely there cannot be a mother, within reach of Gospel truths, who does not crave the privilege of prayer for her children. It is—it must be, at least in seasons of awakened thought and anxiety—the natural outburst of every maternal heart, however careless and worldly, crying out in behalf of loved ones for that help which it feels itself powerless to give.

Oh, then, what a solemn motive for personal holiness is this, the prayer of the *righteous*, and that alone, availeth much !

Living the life of faith in, and obedience to, the Son of God, having thus an Advocate with the Father, we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, to plead for ourselves and for others, especially our children. We may carry all our cares for them to Him who heareth prayer ; we may place them in the arms of His mercy ; we may plead for them His gracious promises.

But, apart from Christ, living without God and without hope, what right have we to ask

for blessings from above upon our children?
And where is there any promise which shall inspire us with confidence in thus asking?

XX.

“Ye are the light of the world.”

“They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”

“David returned to bless his household.”

Matt. v. 14. Acts, iv. 13. II. Sam. vi. 20.

“The children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” Surely a radiance of joy and peace should illumine the houses of those who know the Lord, so that “they which come in may see the light,” much more those “that are in the house.”

We who have a good hope through grace, and are blessed with joy and peace in believing, and are fed and nourished at the table of the Lord, do we make others, especially our children, sharers of our joy?

“Truly,” saith Chrysostom, “we go not into the church merely for the sake of being present, but in order to bear home treasures from this place. We sin by going empty away from the house of God.

"Therefore, when you go home, let the friend bear somewhat to his friend, the father to his children, the masters to their servants. . . .

"From the garden and the forest we bring flowers and branches to our friends, from banquets the mother brings dainties to her children, and shall we return empty from the house of God to our families?"

XXI.

"Who is sufficient for these things?"

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus."

II. Cor. ii. 16. Phil. iv. 13. II. Tim. ii. 1.

Reflecting upon the solemn responsibilities of life, especially those interwoven with the very name of "mother," who does not shrink back in conscious weakness, and cry, Who is sufficient for these things?

Who, indeed! Though the high and mighty ones of earth would smile in derision at the thought, there is a work entrusted to each, even the lowliest Christian mother, which might task the powers of the greatest of them all.

Yet it is our high privilege in Christ to say,

“When I am weak, then I am strong.” “Our sufficiency is of God.” Yes, verily, He who has imposed our duties has “grace sufficient” for us, if we will but use it.

Oh, then, let us never be content to tread with feeble, uncertain steps, the path of life—“to fight as one that beateth the air!” Let us seek to be strong in the Lord, strong in the grace so freely offered; not only for the sake of our own souls—that we may be “perfect,” unreprouvable in His sight—but, also, that we may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” especially to the blessed task which is peculiarly our own!

XXII.

“Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar.”

“Ye have need of patience.”

“All things work together for good to them that love God.”

Ps. cxx. 5 (Prayer Book version). *Heb. x. 36. Rom. viii. 28.*

We wish, we pray for strength of faith, strength of principle, of Christian character; yet, too often we repine, and complain against the very means which God would order to produce this result.

Were it not for these surroundings, we say—this daily vexation, this peculiar hindrance—how free should I be to serve my God !

“But, if we would look aright upon these annoyances—the little trials of every day—we should see that, instead of preventing the attainment of the strength and beauty of Christian character, they are the very means to that end.

“How did God make that royal oak so different from the puny tree in the dense grove ?

“By the very winds and storms from which the other was protected ; by every breeze which agitated it, and caused it to strengthen and balance itself with new roots and branches.

“Thus does God make the Christian strong. He tries him by the little breezes of life’s common, daily trials ; by these He aims to teach us dependence upon Himself, to strengthen our trust.

“Let us resolve, then, not to be overcome by these trials, nor swayed from our steadfastness ; but to *stand* in the strength of the Lord.

“However insignificant they may appear, if they are enough to cool our ardor, to try our

temper, to discourage us in the least, they are important enough for us to do battle with, in the name of the Lord. And, so met and overcome, they will give us strength to encounter greater difficulties. Each contest thus waged will give us new vigor, greater patience, greater faith, and more assured sincerity."

"Nor let the time thou owest to God, be spent
In idly dreaming how thou mightest be,
In what concerns thy spiritual life, more free
From outward hindrance or impediment.
For, presently, this hindrance thou shalt find
That, without which all goodness were a task
So slight, that virtue never could grow strong."

XXIII.

"In weariness and painfulness."

"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh."

"He knoweth our frame."

II. Cor. xi. 27. II. Cor. xii. 7. Ps. ciii. 14.

There are few trials known in this "vale of tears" more grievous to be borne, than is a sickly, pain-stricken body, in the case of one laden with manifold cares and sacred responsibilities. And, from the very nature of things, no persons are more liable to this trial than mothers. How many a mother is, even now, struggling, "in

weariness and painfulness," to fulfil her high duties to her family ; grieving over her utter inability to do for them as she would, while from her heart is wrung the cry, " Oh ! that I had but health and strength to labor for these beloved ones ! "

Dear Christian sister, dwell upon these precious words, " He knoweth our frame." Take to your heart the assurance of the sympathy of Jesus. Take up this, your daily cross, and meekly bear it after Him, seeking to glorify Him by patient endurance, as you would gladly do by active service. And for the life-work, which seems to you so poorly done, trust the Master whom you serve, remembering, for your comfort, His gracious saying, " She hath done what she could." And again, " My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Such consolation as the great Apostle drew from this promise, when, burdened with the care of all the Churches, he thrice besought the Lord that the sore hindrance might depart from him, is open to all who will receive it in the same faith ; to all who rest in the hope that, for the daily burden, daily strength will be

given; and for the fulfilment of all sacred obligations, the "power of Christ" shall rest upon His servant.

XXIV.

"Faint, yet pursuing."

"Be not weary in well-doing."

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. . . . To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

Judges, viii. 4. *II. Thess.* iii. 13. *Rev.* ii. 10, 17.

The above texts may remind us of a danger, the reverse of that we have last considered, and much more common. Indeed, for one who errs by an over-anxious straining of enfeebled powers, there might, doubtless, be found ten who, with averted face and folded hands, are suffering precious opportunities to pass by—opportunities of growing in grace, of ministering to the eternal well-being of children, servants, or acquaintances, or otherwise of serving the cause of Christ and His Church.

Alas! Many are the excuses for neglected duty, which are allowed to satisfy the consciences of those "who are at ease in Zion." Beloved, let it not be so with any of us. Let no slight obstacle deter us from the work which

we might be accomplishing; let no cold indifference or apathy, whether it originate in physical or spiritual disorder, steal as a film over our eyes, concealing from us the glorious privileges which may be within our grasp, of laboring together with all His saints, to the glory of our Lord.

Not by yielding despondently to difficulties, not by indulging in languid inaction, not by irritably repining over the frustration of our favorite plans, but "by patient continuance in well-doing," are we to "seek for glory and honor, and immortality," and thus seeking, we shall obtain the promised "crown of life"—eternal life.

"Holy strivings nerve and strengthen,
Long endurance wins the crown;
Then the evening shadows lengthen
Thou shalt lay thy burden down."

SECTION II.

Duty of a Wife.

Duty of a Wife.

"If ye will be happy in marriage, confide, love, and be patient; be faithful, firm, and holy."

I.

"Marriage is honorable in all."

"And both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage."

"I will therefore that the younger women marry."

Heb. xiii. 4. John, ii. 2. I. Tim. v. 14.

Foremost among the ordinances of a wise and benevolent Creator, for the welfare of our race, as represented in our first parents, was the institution of marriage.

Amid the peaceful purity of Paradise it was given, and hand in hand with the ordinance of the Sabbath; the one, as the most important means to the earthly well-being and happiness of men; the other, to remind of, and prepare them for, a more perfect state beyond the life of probation.

None but the most visionary of men, or those whose blindness is too evidently the result of

unhallowed influences, have been found to deny the wisdom and mercy of God in this appointment.

So clearly is the will of the Lord, in this regard, revealed in Scripture, so emphatic is the blessing of the Church upon the married pair, that they who have entered upon this estate "reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God," may well look up with humble confidence, assured of His blessing.

"Wherefore," as the Homily on Matrimony exhorts, "give thanks to God for His great benefit, in that ye have taken upon you this state of wedlock; and pray you instantly that Almighty God will luckily defend and maintain you therein."

II.

"He that made them in the beginning, made them male and female....wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

"The Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him."

"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband."

Matt. xix. 6. Gen. ii. 18. Prov. xii. 4.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor, in his sermon, "The Marriage Ring," thus discourses :

“Marriage was ordained of God, instituted in Paradise, was the relief of a natural necessity, and the first blessing from the Lord. He gave to man, not a friend, but a wife; that is, a friend and a wife, too.

“The first miracle that ever Jesus did, was to do honor to a wedding. Marriage was in the world before sin, and is, in all ages of the world, the most effective antidote against sin . . . and although sin hath soured marriage, and struck the man’s head with cares, and the woman’s bed with sorrows, in the production of children, yet these are but throes of life and glory, and ‘she shall be saved in child-bearing, if she be found in faith and righteousness.’

“Marriage is a school and exercise of virtue, and though marriage hath cares, yet . . . the cares are but instances of duty and exercises of piety; and, therefore, if single life hath more privacy of devotion, yet marriage hath more necessities, and more variety in it, and is the exercise of more graces.

“This state hath proper exercises and trials for those graces for which single life can never be crowned; here is the proper scene of piety

and patience, of the duty of parents, and the charity of relatives; here kindness is spread abroad, and love is united and made firm as a centre.

“Marriage is the nursery of Heaven; the virgin sends prayers to God, but she carries but one soul to Him; but the state of marriage fills up the number of the elect, and hath in it the labor of love, and the delicacies of friendship, the blessing of society, and the union of hands and hearts.”

III.

“They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

“Dwell as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.”

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him.”

Eph. v. 31, 32. 1. Pet. iii. 7. Prov. iii. 6.

In the marriage service, matrimony is spoken of as a “holy estate,” and we are admonished that it “is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly.”

“Well deemed the Church that more than meets the eye
Marks the bright bands that soul with soul ally.”

The chapter in Ephesians, from which one of the above texts is taken, thoughtfully perused,

must greatly elevate our ideas of the sacredness of this union.

“Marriage,” observes Bishop Taylor, “in very many things, makes the chaste pair to be like Christ.

“This is a great mystery, but it is the symbolical and sacramental representment of the greatest mysteries of our religion.

“It must be in Christ and the Church. If this be not observed, marriage loses its mysteriousness. But, because it is to effect much of that which it signifies, it concerns all who enter into those golden fetters to see that Christ and His Church be in at every one of its periods, and that it be entirely conducted and overruled by religion.”

IV.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”

“As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”

“They are commanded to be under obedience.”

Col. iii. 18. *Eph.* v. 24. *I. Cor.* xiv. 34.

These passages, it would seem, are explicit, in regard to the duty of submission on the part of the wife, the idea of which, as denoting a cer-

tain inferiority in the position of woman, is scouted with indignation by many of our time, while others explain these and similar injunctions as intended only for states of society then existing, and smile at the thought of imposing such restrictions upon the civilization and refinement of the present day.

But it must be apparent to any humble-minded reader of the Word, that this order is a part of the plan and will of God, for the well-being and peace of the family, "that Divine institution on which the Church itself mainly relies for its prosperity."

This wifely duty is thus alluded to in "The Marriage Ring" :

"The first (duty of the wife) is obedience; which because it is nowhere enjoined that the man should exact of her, but often commanded to her to pay, gives demonstration that it is a voluntary cession that is required; such a cession as must be without coercion or violence on his part, but upon fair inducements and reasonableness of the thing, and out of love and honor on her part.

"When God commands us to love Him, He

means we should obey Him. 'This is love that ye keep My commandments,' and, 'If ye love me (said our Lord) keep My commandments.' Now, as Christ is to the Church, so is man to the wife, and, therefore, obedience is the best instance of her love. The man's authority is love, and the woman's love is obedience.

"'Male and female created He them, and called their name Adam,' saith the Holy Scripture; they are but one, and, therefore, the several parts of this one man must stand in the place where God appointed, that the lower parts may do their offices in their own station, and promote the common interest of the whole."

V.

"And unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

"Even as Sara obeyed. . . . whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

"I esteem all Thy precepts, concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."

Gen. iii. 16. *I. Peter*, iii. 6. *Ps.* cxix-cxxviii.

In view of the peculiar position and trials allotted to her by the Creator, the Christian wife

is thus encouraged in the quaint language of the Homily on Matrimony :

“But St. Peter saith that this is the chief ornament of holy matrons, in that they set their hope and trust in God. That is to say, in that they refused not from matrimony for the business thereof, for the griefs and perils thereof, but committed all such adventures to God, in most sure trust of help, after that they have called upon His aid. O woman, do thou the like, and so shalt thou be most excellently beautified before God and all His angels and saints.”

VI.

Let “the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

“A woman that honoreth her husband shall be judged wise of all.”

“Submit yourselves . . . for the Lord’s sake.”

Eph. v. 33. *Ecclus.* xxxvi. 26. *I. Pet.* ii. 13.

The Divine command requires not merely obedience on the part of the wife, but *reverence*; that is, respect and deference evinced in her habitual deportment, in looks, tones, and actions.

Happy the wife who is united to one whose personal character calls forth this respect.

But should it prove otherwise in any case, let

it be remembered that reverence is enjoined as due, not because of the superior wisdom and judgment of the men, but because of the authority and dignity vested in him as head of the household, by God himself, and acknowledged by the wife in her solemn marriage vow.

We have in the previous section dwelt at length upon the influence of a mother's example upon her children. Is it enough thought of in this connection ?

The same expressions are used in Holy Writ of the duty of a wife to her husband, and of children to their parents. Should children interpret their own filial duty by the conduct of their mother in her wifely relation, what would be the sad result in many instances ?

A recent theological writer, dwelling upon the true position of the wife, in comment upon I. Pet. iii., thus remarks :

“ Let us know that God's way is ever best. It is simply impossible for any woman, however superior it may be in intelligence and general character, to affect a domestic equality with her husband without, to the same extent, compromising the real dignity and happiness both of

herself and of the entire household. Many a mother has wept bitter tears over lawless children who began by imitating her own example as a wife."

VII.

"She that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."

"A virtuous woman rejoiceth her husband."

"Even as Christ pleased not Himself."

I. Cor. vii. 34. Eccclus. xxvi. 2. Rom. xv. 3.

In connection with these texts, we must be allowed to introduce the following excellent remarks of Dr. Hague:

"The Scriptures inculcate it as the duty of the wife to make it her aim to please her husband in all things—that is, in all things wherein compliance is not sinful. St. Paul says the married man 'seeketh how to please his wife'; he assumes that where there is a right spirit, this disposition prevails, as a matter of course; he also takes it for granted that the wife seeketh how to please her husband.

"This view of the subject stretches beyond the limit of definite rules, and gives to the mind and heart of each, free play in studying how to

promote the other's happiness. Love is inventive. Little attentions, unsought and unexpected, work mightily the permanent union of kindred minds. Their power to soothe and to cheer, to cast a bland light over the roughnesses of life, is incalculable.

"This rule evidently extends to the most trifling things relating to home life, to dress, carriage, manners, appearance; and all these should be regarded with as much care after marriage, as they usually are before it.

"It applies, also, to that oversight of the house, that presidency over the family circle, which is necessary to secure there that order and regularity which will make it a desired and peaceful home."

VIII.

"A silent and loving woman is a gift from the Lord; and there is nothing so much worth as a mind well instructed."

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her . . . she will do him good and not evil all the days of his life."

"If there be kindness, meekness, and comfort in her tongue, then is not her husband like other men."

Ecclus. xxvi. 14. *Prov.* xxxi. 11, 12. *Ecclus.* xxxvi. 23.

"Who can find a virtuous woman?" asks the mother of King Lemuel; and adds, "Her price

is above rubies." And in reading such passages as the above, and others giving the Scriptural ideal of a true and faithful wife, are there many who can feel that they come up to this standard? Is there not seldom one who is, in such measure, a helpmeet unto her husband?

The "well-instructed mind," whose energies are untiringly, yet unobtrusively, devoted to his welfare; with loving sympathy entering into all his labors and aims; in whom his heart may "safely trust" to preside over his household, and guide his children's tender years; silent as to his faults, but ever ready with a "word in season" of kindness and comfort: of such an one it is said, "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, also, and he praiseth her."

"Framed for the post she filled, she asked no more
Reward or honor than that station bore;
Enough of honor and of rich reward
To bless her household and to serve her Lord.
To the calm quiet of her home retired,
No pleasures lured her, no applauses fired;
Her husband came, and all the toils of life
Lost all their thorns before his charming wife.
While wealth was theirs, his liberal board she spread
His blithe repast, the poor's remembered bread.

When all that affluence tottered to its fall,
She still could wish him joy, since this were all,
And with a sweet content she bade him prize
The bliss that Heaven to virtue ne'er denies."

IX.

"That they may teach the younger women . . . to love their husbands."

"Forbearing one another in love."

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Titus, ii. 4. *Eph.* iv. 2. *Gal.* vi. 2.

"Teach them to love their husbands," St. Paul enjoins. The young bride, in all the freshness and ardor of her youthful love, will smile at the thought that such a precept should be ever needed. The wife of many years, while bearing toward the companion of her life's joys and sorrows an affection whose depth and strength the young bride cannot fathom, will yet acknowledge that one must often need the teaching and counsel of the good Word and Spirit of God, to enable her to stifle the risings of resentment and bitter feeling, and to keep the flame of love burning serenely and brightly, while journeying over the roughnesses of life's daily paths.

"The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear,

And something, every day they live,
To pity, and perhaps forgive."

X.

"Whose adorning let it be the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

"A soft answer turneth away wrath : but grievous words stir up anger."

"The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water."

I. Pet. iii. 3, 4. *Prov.* xv. 1. *Prov.* xvii. 14.

Bishop Taylor has a passage of advice upon this point:

"Let man and wife be careful to stifle little things, that, as fast as they spring up, they be cut down and trod upon.

"In the frequent little accidents of a family, a man's reason cannot always be awake, and when his discourses are imperfect, and a trifling trouble makes him yet more restless, he is soon betrayed to the violence of passion. It is certain that men or women are in a state of weakness and folly, then, when they can be troubled with a trifling accident ; and therefore it is not good to tempt their affections when they are in that state of danger.

"In this case, the caution is to subtract fuel

from the sudden flame. Add no new provocation to the accident, and do not inflame this, and peace will soon return, and the discontent will pass away as the sparks from the collision of a flint."

XI.

"Dwell . . . as being heirs together of the grace of life ; that your prayers be not hindered."

"We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company."

"With one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel."

I. Pet. iii. 7. *Ps.* lv. 14. *Phil.* i. 27.

"It is presupposed," says a Christian writer, "that the union of husband and wife is founded upon some bonds of sympathy in mind, taste, affections, or at least of interest.

"But unless there is a better bond than one or all of these, the true tie will be wanting ; that which death cannot dissolve, and which the constant filterings of cares and sorrows, of faults and failures, cannot wear away.

"Happy is the wife who can find Christian sympathy in the sharer of her trials, and an earthly supporter pointing to the sustaining arm of heavenly love. And happy is the husband,

who, in his hours of trial, from whatever source, can find a sympathizing spirit, the lamp of whose love ever burns toward Heaven, and is as a beacon-light and a star of hope in his earthly course.

“Souls that carry on a blest exchange
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,
And with a fearless confidence make known
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own ;
Feel less the journey’s roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And one in heart, in interest, in design,
Gird up each other for the race Divine.”

XII.

“Did He not make one? Yet had He the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That He might seek a godly seed.”

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”

“The generation of the upright shall be blessed.”

Mal. ii. 15. Luke, i. 6. Ps. cxii. 2.

Important as is this bond of Christian fellowship, for their own highest peace, to those who are to walk life’s pathway together, it is far more necessary in view of that most momentous of their life duties—the rearing their offspring for God.

In regard to this, how significantly may we ask, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Where the parents are one in heart and purpose to "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord," and to "command their children and household after them," there the Lord shall not in vain "seek a godly seed."

But, alas! many a burdened heart will testify how hard it is for one parent to guide the children in the ways of holiness, when the other, who should be equally interested and zealous in this blessed work, looks on with chilling indifference; or by evil example, or, it may be, by direct opposition and ridicule, baffles, to a sad degree, the efforts of the earnest-hearted one.

If these words should meet the eye of one thus situated, we would say, be not disheartened, but rather labor the more perseveringly and faithfully, since, under God, so much depends upon you.

The question often arises, "What is the duty of the wife in cases where there is a difference of religious opinions and belief?" In these instances, there is comparatively no difficulty un-

til the presence of children, and the necessity of their training greatly involves the matter, and awakens the anxious heart to a sad consciousness of the great mistake in such an union.

To a wife thus circumstanced, the advice must be: Comply with your husband in all points which are not matters of conscience; meet him as much as possible on the common ground of faith and Christian practice, and labor thereupon with him harmoniously for the well-being of your offspring.

Studiously avoid, also, all strife of words, and argument in behalf of your creed; on the part of a wife it will but embitter, and can do no good. Seek, rather, to honor your faith by holy living, and plead your cause by prayer.

XIII.

"If any obey not the word, they also may be won by the conversation of the wives."

"Teach the young women....to be discreet....that the word of God be not blasphemed."

"For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?"

I. Pet. iii. 1. Tit. ii. 4, 5. I. Cor. vii. 16.

These words, especially the soul-stirring appeal of St. Paul to the Christian wife, must send

a thrill of hope and encouragement to the heart of the most afflicted and desponding.

Let the wife whose life-companion is "without God and without hope in the world," be "instant in season and out of season," in her prayers and efforts for his salvation.

As she is self-denying and untiring in her labors for his earthly weal, oh, let her deem no sacrifice too great, no exertions wearying, that may be blessed in securing his eternal welfare !

Above all, let her seek the guidance of heavenly wisdom in this work, which calls, indeed, for "the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove." Her efforts must, in great measure, be silent and unobtrusive ; her influence that of a pure and holy example, and of faithful, believing, unwavering prayer ; but using these, let her never despair of an answer of peace.

XIV.

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short."

"The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage."

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy . . . to stand before the Son of man.”

I. Cor. vii. 29. Luke, xx. 34, 35. Luke, xxi. 36.

We cannot better close this section than with the concluding paragraph of “The Marriage Ring” :

“Those married pairs that live as remembering that they must part again, and give an account how they treat themselves and each other, shall, at the day of their death, be admitted to glorious espousals, and when they shall live again, be married to their Lord, and partake of His glories, with Abraham and Joseph, St. Peter and St. Paul, and all the married saints.

“‘All those things that now please us shall pass from us, or we from them;’ but those things that concern the other life, are permanent as the numbers of eternity.

“And although at the resurrection there shall be no relation of husband and wife, and no marriage shall be celebrated but the marriage of the Lamb, yet then shall be remembered how men and women passed through this state, which is a type of that; and from this sacramental union, all holy pairs shall pass to the spiritual and

eternal, where love shall be their portion, and joys shall crown their heads, and they shall lie in the bosom of Jesus, and in the heart of God to eternal ages. Amen."

SECTION III.



Household Cares.

Household Cares.

O happy house, O home supremely blest,
Where Thou, Lord Jesus Christ art entertained
As the most welcome and beloved guest,
With true devotion, and with love unfeigned;
Where all hearts beat in unison with Thine,
Where eyes grow brighter as they look on Thee,
Where all are ready, at the slightest sign,
To do Thy will, and do it heartily.

I.

"They constrained him, saying, Abide with us."

"He blesseth the habitation of the just."

"Therefore now let it please Thee to bless the house of
Thy servant."

Luke, xxiv. 29. Prov. iii. 33. II. Sam. vii. 29.

What is, and what should be our idea of a
Christian home?

Is it intended to be merely a place in which
persons thrown together by circumstances, pleas-
ing or adverse, as the case may appear, find
shelter and the supply of their natural wants?
If this were all, then might household care be
justly deemed a wearisome routine of uninter-
esting toil.

But far more than this did the All-wise Father design when He "placed the solitary in families," when He declared of His people, "I will dwell with them and walk with them."

And, if not to be a mere inn by life's wayside, surely not either was the household framed to serve as a setting for the baubles of earthly pride, as a shrine for this world's idols.

Not such was that patriarchal home to which angels were welcomed, and where the Lord of angels Himself communed with Abraham, His friend. Not such the home at Shunem, of whose inner life we have pleasing glimpses; where husband and wife consulted together to honor and entertain, according to their means, the servant of the Lord, and whose inmates could say, in joy or in sorrow, It is well. Not such, again, was that peaceful and favored home at Bethany to which Jesus was wont to retire from the busy scenes of His earthly ministry.

There are Christian homes scattered throughout our land—and would to God there were more of them!—whose watchword is the will of the Lord, and whose light and gladness is His favor; homes whose inmates eat and drink and

do all to the glory of God, seeking His blessing upon their basket and their store, upon their going out and coming in, and upon all that they put their hand unto ; homes blest with the felt presence of the Saviour, hallowing every joy, sharing every grief, placing His hand in blessing upon the head of sportive childhood, walking all unseen

“By his toiling servant’s side,”

and sustaining the feeble steps of age ; homes in which those whom God’s providence hath banded together dwell as heirs together of the grace of life. In such a home may it be the privilege and happiness of each of us to live and labor !

Oh, happy house, where Thou dost share the weal,
Where none forget Thee, whatsoe’er befall ;
Oh, happy house, where Thou the wounds dost heal,—
The Healer and the Comforter of all,—
Till every one his stated task hath done,
And all at length shall peacefully depart
To the bright realms where Thou Thyself art gone,—
The Father’s house, where Thou already art.

II.

“I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”
“As the sun when it ariseth in the high heaven ; so is the beauty of a good wife in the ordering of her house.”

"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

Ps. ci. 2. Eccles. xxvi. 16. Prov. xxxi. 27.

"A well-ordered family," says one, "is the genial nursery of all that is noble in human character;" says another, of a cheerful, happy, Christian home, "It is the very gate of heaven."

If these things be so, what shall we say of the dignity and responsibility of her upon whom, humanly speaking, the management and order, the spirit and tone of the household must mainly depend?

Apart from the consideration already dwelt upon (Sec. I.), that even in the lowest station, the most menial employments, we may, and are bound to glorify our Master, it is a truth that the position of the "housemother" is one of great, and too generally overlooked, importance. It is well we should strive to realize this. Says a sensible and observing writer, "The mind is so made as to be elevated and cheered by a sense of far-reaching influence and usefulness. A woman who feels that she is a cipher, and that it makes little difference how she performs her duties, has far less to sustain and invigorate her than one

who truly estimates the importance of her station."

It would surprise any one who had not considered the point, to observe how many passages of Scripture advert to the household duties of woman, "guiding the house," as St. Paul so aptly designates her peculiar sphere. And yet no one would be surprised who should reflect in how great measure the comfort and usefulness of adult members of the family, especially of its head, and the well-being of children and servants, depend upon the principles on which the household affairs are conducted, and the degree of wisdom, patience, skill, and energy with which these principles are carried out. In all that relates to these domestic matters the mistress of the household must be, as Wordsworth expresses it, "the very pulse of the machine."

Who can duly estimate the importance of this post, and not long to realize the poet's conception of

" A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command."

Or, loftier aim still, the portraiture in Holy Writ, of such a one, whose "price is above rubies."

III.

"The church that is in their house."

"Abram . . . came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre . . . and built there an altar unto the Lord."

"He erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel."

Rom. xvi. 5. Gen. xiii. 18. Gen. xxxiii. 20.

The first duty the performance of which marks distinctively the Christian household, is that of family prayer—"That reasonable and acceptable offering," as one beautifully expresses it, "in which, morning and evening, the godly parents lay all that they are, and all that they have, upon the altar of sacrifice."

The texts above quoted point out the practice of the patriarchs. "In all their wanderings from place to place, wherever they pitched their tent, they raised an altar for the worship of God in their family. And later than their day, even after the worship of God was established at the Tabernacle and Temple, holy men appear to have had, besides that, some family worship, as we read, for instance, that David returned after a long public service, 'to bless his household.' Later still, in the prophets, God threatens to pour out His fury 'upon the families that call not upon His name,' and we read of families

‘seeking Him apart,’ with special religious service. In the New Testament we find frequent mention of the ‘Church which was in the house’ of some individual. Cornelius appears to have prayed with his family. The company of disciples was to our Lord as a family of which He was the head, and He is especially said to have prayed with them, and to have asked a blessing at meals. So clearly do these evidences establish the truth, that the people of God, in all ages, have had their domestic altar to the God of Israel.”

Indeed, we can hardly conceive of a household naming the name of Christ, and professedly desiring His presence and blessing, yet neglecting thus unitedly to seek and acknowledge Him.

Doubtless it is the bounden duty of the father and head to act as the priest of his household. But in case of his absence, or, more trying still, of his unwillingness to perform the duty, let the Christian mother, with his consent, see to it that the sweet savor of the incense of prayer shall “ascend up before God,” day by day, from the altar devoutly set up within her home.

IV.

"When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are."

"If my people . . . shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face . . . then will I hear from Heaven."

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

Matt. vi. 5. II. Chron. vii. 14. I. Cor. xiv. 40.

The following remarks of a Christian writer are, we fear, too sadly applicable to many a household :

"Often," he says, "has my heart been pained by the hurried and irreverent manner in which I have seen what is called 'family prayer' conducted.

"The heads of a household, from custom or conscience, thought it right to meet their children and servants night and morning, and they were collected at a stated hour ; but there was confusion downstairs, and confusion upstairs, and no signs of that 'preparedness of heart which cometh from the Lord' to conduct us to the Lord.

"If you enter upon family worship wholly unprepared, and go through it as a form, no interest is excited, and you may expect to see your family, though duly seated around you,

with the vacant look which proves the mind regardless of what is going on. Let your endeavor be to render the service of family prayer a means of grace. Let it be conducted in a serious, solemn, reverential manner, and look upward for the spirit of prayer and praise to be poured out upon your little company in such measure that your sacrifice may not be that of 'fools,' but a profitable service to all."

To these remarks it may be added that special effort should be made to engage the attention of children at family devotions, and, to this end, the language of the prayers should be simple, such as all may comprehend and unite in. As a means of collecting the thoughts, and preparing the younger members of the household to join reverently in devotion, we know of nothing more effectual than the singing of a hymn, in which all, even the little ones, should be encouraged to unite.

V.

"Walk in wisdom. . . . redeeming the time."

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

Col. iv. 5. Eccl. iii. 1. Rom. xii. 11.

Having consecrated the day to God, the next step is so to apportion its precious hours, so to distribute and allot the manifold concerns of the day, the business which presses upon our attention, that there shall be a season for everything necessary to be accomplished in the household economy, and a time to every rightly cherished purpose; and so that, in this respect again, all things shall be "done decently and in order." If this be a difficult task in the case of one whose hands, unaided, must minister to each oft-recurring want of her family, it demands no less wisdom and patience in one who must regulate the disposal, not only of her own time, but that of others, often of ignorant and heedless persons. In order that the avocations of the household shall proceed smoothly, without crowding and confusion, the mistress of the house must aim and study to reduce her domestic affairs to a regular system, and she must, by all means, herself set the example of "redeeming the time."

VI.

“What *is* thine occupation?”

“Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

“What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?”

Jonah, i. 8. *Eph.* v. 17. *John*, vi. 28.

The saying is no doubt strictly true that “there can be no such thing as conflicting duty.” Yet what mother or housemistress has not disputed it in her heart?

No general rules with regard to the regulation and apportionment of time can be laid down that would fit particular cases, for probably no two households could be found which would be suited with precisely the same management.

Yet there are rules by which each Christian should walk, and precepts laid down by the Master, which will aid any one in “understanding what the will of the Lord is,” in her own case.

Let any woman who finds herself bewildered by the accumulation of duties, apparently such, which she has neither time nor strength to discharge properly, calmly pass these in review,

under the judgment of the "Single Eye," applying the rules of life which the Lord hath given, and she will hardly fail to find out the *something* which has absorbed an undue proportion of her time and efforts; which, in her case, involves an unwise outlay of these precious talents; and which, if stricken from her list of occupations, would leave time for the quiet performance of neglected duties which have chafed her spirit, and destroyed her peace of mind.

From the overpiled work-basket, for instance, some articles of unnecessary adornment might be abstracted; from the well furnished table some superfluous luxury withdrawn; the house furnishing, regarded in the light of Christian simplicity, may seem more complete than when compared with that of others, possessed of more wealth or leisure; in some way it will be proved that for the work which is really demanded of us, time and ability is given.

VII.

"She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household."

"Through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through."

“The hand of the diligent maketh rich.”

Prov. xxxi. 15. *Eccl.* x. 18. *Prov.* x. 4.

“Few, even of those who call themselves industrious, can affirm that all their moments are faithfully improved. The most diligent are generally the first to lament their loss of time; for time, like human life, is most freely wasted and destroyed by those who least know its value.

“We may not suffer hours to pass idly by, and yet fragments enough to form hours may be lost in each day, because when some task is completed, we think we can afford to rest, or expect soon to be called to some other duty, and therefore idle away the interval. Those who have accomplished much in the world have learned the happy art of redeeming these fragments, as the goldsmith spreads his apron and saves all the filings of gold, which, little in themselves, when run together, form something of great value.”

The author of these remarks by no means intended to condemn as wasted the time given to needed relaxation and rest. A due amount of recreation is as useful for the furtherance of our work as it is for health of mind and body. “The

bow cannot be always bent, or it will lose its spring and become useless."

But, apart from the time which may be thus properly, yes, religiously employed in recreation, it is too true that many habitually "look to the little intervals and interstices of work," to use the words of Dr. Goulburn, "as so much time which may be freely wasted, trifled away, frittered away, sinned away without compunction, flung recklessly into the great gulf of unredeemed possibilities."

One very important method of redeeming the time is mentioned in the first of the texts collated above. Of the virtuous woman and model housekeeper described in the book of Proverbs it is said that she riseth early, "while it is yet night."

No period of the day is so important to the housekeeper as the golden hours of the morning, and a habit of late rising, indulged in by the heads of the household, and, almost of course, imitated by children and servants, is directly opposed to good order and system in family arrangements.

More than this, the quiet hour of early morn-

ing, before the bustle of the day begins, is often the only time which the mistress of a family can secure, free from interruption, for the privileges of private devotion. If this be lost for the sake of a "little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep," will not a want be sorely felt throughout the day? Let us resolve with David, "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord : early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up."

VIII.

"Every wise woman buildeth her house."

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

"Gather up the fragments. . . that nothing be lost."

Prov. xiv. 1. Rom. xii. 17. John, vi. 12.

These verses call our attention to another important feature of domestic care, namely, a wise economy in expenses. In this, as in the employment of our time, we are to be guided as Christians by the perfect law of God.

And first, "Every wise woman," in this respect, "buildeth her house." No social position, no amount of wealth, can exempt a woman who is placed by Providence at the head of a fam-

ily, from the duty of "looking well to the ways of her household" in regard to this matter.

The command, "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost," is as binding upon the rich as upon the poor; to be lavish and reckless of expense is to place a great temptation and stumbling-block in the way of servants and persons employed in the house; and again, that which the family do not need for themselves, should be saved "to give to him that needeth." "If thou hast much, *give* plenteously."

A very prevalent fault of the present day is extravagance—a living beyond the means. The sad story is all too common of bankruptcy, or startling frauds, as the consequence of such a course. In a majority of cases the wife, if not chiefly responsible for such a state of things, has been, at least, a willing participant in the guilt and folly involved in this way of living.

It is the duty of the mistress of a family to know the amount of means which may be devoted to current expenses in her household, consistently with the Divine precepts—"Owe no man anything," and—"Provide things honest in the sight of all men," and conscientiously to

regulate her style of living, dress, and other expenditures according to that income, remembering always to leave a generous margin for charitable and religious purposes.

IX.

“The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

“Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful.”

Mark, iv. 19. *Matt.* iv. 4. *Luke*, x. 41.

We are reminded here how easily a praiseworthy virtue may be carried to excess, and shade off into a fault.

The prudent care, the industrious economy which the Scriptures commend, how apt are these to exceed the limits of Christian moderation, and become those very “cares of the world,” that anxious and troubled spirit, against which we are warned in these texts.

Again, the Saviour speaks of “the deceitfulness of riches,” and admonishes us to “take heed, and beware of covetousness.” Most needful is this caution, for no sin creeps into the

heart more stealthily and unawares than covetousness—the love of money.

Under the guise of a commendable providence, a reasonable care for one's own children, or a just regard for the claims of society, the "covetousness which is idolatry" gradually gains possession of the soul.

Against these perils we must "watch and pray," seeking to calm all undue anxieties about our worldly concerns with the assurance, "The Lord will provide." "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," for "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

X.

"Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil."

"Study to be quiet."

"Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit."

Ps. xxxvii. 8. *I. Thess.* iv. 11. *Ecc.* iv. 6.

There is a fault to which notable housekeepers are especially prone, which seems to approach nearer to the spirit of Martha, which was reproved by our Lord, than does a mere anxiety for the due supply of temporal needs.

Such persons take pride in their good housewifery, system and economy—in having all things well and creditably done about their establishment, and this pride is too apt to show itself in worrying and fault-finding at any disturbance of their arrangements. In Martha's case, the "care and trouble" at that particular time was evidently an eager desire that the honored guest should be well entertained, and her busy carefulness overwhelmed all considerations for the feelings and employment of her sister.

There is many a household, the members of which may be humbly seeking to sit at the feet of Jesus, whose peace is disturbed by the over-carefulness, and needless fretting of its mistress.

Good housewifery, let it be remembered, is "good" and valuable only as a means to an end—that end the well-being, temporal and spiritual, of the members of the household.

Surely a great wrong is committed, when this means is exalted to be an object in itself, to the attainment of which the peace of the household, the best interests of the children or others, and too often the Christian temper of the house-mother, are sacrificed.

XI.

"That He may bring forth food out of the earth, . . . and bread which strengtheneth man's heart."

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

"Feed me with food convenient for me."

Ps. civ. 14, 15. I. Cor. x. 31. Prov. xxx. 8.

A very important care devolving upon the mistress of a family, is that of providing suitable food.

There is a homely proverb to the effect that "the Lord sends meat, but the enemy sends cooks," and when we consider how frequently the bounties of Providence are perverted by carelessness, or ignorance of the laws of health, into active causes of illness and disorder, we can hardly deem this too strong language.

It certainly is the serious concern of every woman who has thus the health of a family in her keeping, to be herself well informed and competent, and to give her personal care and watchful oversight to this matter.

The table of a Christian family should not be loaded with costly, unwholesome, or luxurious dainties; but it should be provided, according to their means, with a proper variety of whole-

some and palatable food. And this should be received with thanksgiving, and in moderation, for the purpose of refreshment and sustenance, not for the mere gratification of the appetite. The mother and mistress of a family may do much by a judicious management of her table, and by example and quiet influence, to promote habits of temperance and self-restraint in eating and drinking, not only in her children, but in all whom Providence gathers around her board.

XII.

“The lambs are for thy clothing.”

“She is not afraid of the snow for her household : for all her household are clothed with scarlet.”

“Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”

Prov. xxvii. 26. Prov. xxxi. 21. I. Tim. vi. 8.

Another branch of household care which claims our notice, is that of providing clothing for the family. In this department, as in the preparation of food, strict regard should be had to the laws of health. To violate these for the sake of fashion, or of indulging personal or maternal vanity, is most criminal weakness.

To supply a family with raiment which shall be neat and tasteful, suited to the station and

income, adapted to the varying seasons, and to the constitutional needs of each, is a matter which rightly demands much time and attention. Yet, because it is so necessary, there is special need of caution, lest it absorb an undue portion of thought and care.

Perhaps in no point are Christian women more liable to overstep the bounds of a religious simplicity, in none are they more easily led into worldly conformity than in the matter of dress.

The scrupulous following of the mode which we too often see, involving an amount of labor and care far beyond what would be required for health, comfort, or respectable appearance, certainly does not accord with the precepts of Scripture regarding our apparel, and cannot be consistent with our duty as Christians.

XIII.

"Give unto your servants that which is just and equal."

"Knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him."

"Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land."

Col. iv. 1. Eph. vi. 9. Deut. xxiv. 14.

These verses call our attention to the duty of

householders toward those engaged in their domestic service.

We hear much of the delinquencies of persons thus employed, and of the great difficulty of obtaining good and faithful servants; but, perhaps, were employers to study more closely their own conduct in these connections, they would find no small degree of blame resting upon themselves. The Word of God contains full as many admonitions to masters as to servants, if not more; admonitions which we shall do well to ponder, if we are placed in this difficult position.

And first we may notice St. Paul's injunction, which is but an application of the golden rule to this particular case,—that we “give unto our servants that which is just and equal.”

There is need of care upon this point, even in the case of those who would be shocked at the imputation of injustice or hard dealing. It is to be feared that employers have become so accustomed to regard themselves as the victims of a system of extortion, that they are quite too ready to meet their servants half way in this matter. “The laborer is worthy of his hire,” and it is the

part of the mistress of a household to see to it that the labor of her domestics is fairly compensated, and that no more is exacted of them than is reasonable and just. It is often the case that sickness, or other incidents in the family, will throw additional labors upon servants for the time being. Such extra services, often cheerfully rendered, should be acknowledged at least with grateful appreciation, and where the case demands, with the offer of extra pay.

The Scriptures enjoin prompt and regular payment as an important feature of justice. "The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." "At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee." "Say not to thy neighbor, go and come again, when thou hast it by thee."

The "annals of the poor" might reveal many an instance of wrong and suffering, the result of the culpable thoughtlessness and indifference of employers in this respect.

XIV.

"If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant . . . what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him? Did not He that made me in the womb make him?"

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Job, xxxi. 13-15. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. vi. 2.

The law of Christ, to which we profess to yield obedience, requires not merely that we deal honorably and justly with those in our employ, but also that we feel an interest in their welfare, as our fellow creatures, children of our common Father. Employers sometimes seem to act as if the thin partition wall between parlor and kitchen separated beings of a different nature—as if those in their service did not possess the same sensibilities, the same human wants and infirmities with themselves.

An excellent writer, speaking more particularly of young persons employed in domestic service, remarks, "As a class, such persons frequently suffer for want of Christian sympathy. They have their sorrows and trials: they have physical evils to encounter, as well as those who have nothing else to do but to notice them ;

they know what it is to feel lassitude, weariness, and discouragement creeping over them. They have, too, the same infirmity of nature, the same bad tempers and habits, and they are liable to dulness of comprehension, treachery of memory, and various other failings incident to the erring children of earth. Yet, while there is kind forbearance, patient instruction, and indulgent excuses for the children of a household, how seldom is such kindness and patience shown toward one who is dependent or a hireling. How many, young in years, whose mental and moral culture have been sadly neglected, are turned away at the shortest notice, after a brief trial of their conduct, because they cannot at once do perfectly well, or because they evince faults which would draw forth the tear of grief from a fond parent, and counsels and prayers from the Christian interested for souls."

As Christians, therefore, we are to feel ourselves bound to regard the health, comfort, and happiness of our domestics; we are to respect their feelings, to shield their character from thoughtless injury, and, above all, we are to study to promote their eternal well-being.

It is often the case that those thus connected with our households are so separated from us by creed and prejudice that there seems no opportunity for making any religious impression upon them. Yet, even here, there is scope for an influence for good, which, if prayerfully exerted, will not fail of its effect.

XV.

"In her tongue is the law of kindness."

"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry."

"Forbearing threatening."

Prov. xxxi. 26. *Ecc.* vii. 9. *Eph.* vi. 9.

Of this "law of kindness" Dr. Hague remarks: "This takes within its scope our habits of address, our words and tones, our manners, and the general spirit of our intercourse. All these have their set place among the lights and shadows of home life; and all these elements of character are comprehended within the reach of that brief precept of the Apostle Paul—'*forbearing threatening*.'"

"Every one knows that they who rule well their own houses must have many directions to lay down with great explicitness, many faults to correct, and, of course, sometimes reproofs to

administer; but everything, as to the effect upon the mind, depends on the manner and the spirit in which the thing is done. The eyes are the windows of the soul; and if, looking out through them, it dart forth the glance of wrath, contempt, or pride, it provokes kindred passions, exasperates where it ought to soothe, and repels where it ought to rule with a gentle influence. Even though in this way the point seems to be carried practically, yet it is only for a time. There is gained nothing of that fine control over the mind which gentleness always confers. Undoubtedly mistakes and errors, faults, follies, and inadvertencies will sometimes occur, so as to render a pointed rebuke necessary. Yet let it be seen that fault-finding is not an agreeable business; that it does not afford you a genial excitement, or a pleasant pastime, and that the opportunity is never welcome. 'Be ye angry and sin not'; and after the first word of reproof be especially on your guard, for he who lets passion goad him, punishes himself instead of the offender."

XVI.

"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant."

"This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe."

"That day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on."

Ex. xx. 9, 10. *Ex.* xvi. 23. *Luke*, xxiii. 54.

The proper observance of the day of rest in a family depends very greatly upon the care of the mistress of the house, and especially upon the use which is made of the "preparation" day. Let it be considered a sacred duty to see that everything which can be done on the previous day, be attended to, that the Lord's Day may be indeed a day of rest and freedom from earthly care.

"Domestics should be allowed," observes the writer last quoted, "as far as may be possible, the enjoyment of the benefits of the Lord's Day. 'The Sabbath was made for man,' it was made for *them*. Although works of necessity and mercy are then lawful, it is wrong to demand of our servants anything that lieth beyond the limit marked by these two terms. If we use the

Lord's Day as a day of feasting, and to this end lay on our domestics heavy tasks, keeping them at home to be engrossed with fatiguing drudgery, we not only wrong our own souls, but we 'feast on our servants' birthright.' The sacred hours of the Sabbath, beyond the limit already designated, belong to them as their Heavenly Father's gift, and it is treating them unjustly to deprive them of that time which has been set apart for them to employ in laying up that moral treasure which moth and rust cannot corrupt."

XVII.

"Use hospitality one to another without grudging."

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."

I. Pet. iv. 9. Heb. xiii. 2. Rom. xii. 13.

Hospitality is a household virtue most frequently inculcated in Holy Scripture by the example of saints, as well as by direct precept. The hospitality which the Bible commends is not that worldly policy which graciously entertains those from whom a recompense is expected, nor is it the vain love of display which makes a

feast and throws wide open the portals, to win the envious admiration of a heartless throng.

True Christian hospitality is prompted and sustained by unselfishness and disinterested kindness ; it will exert itself as actively for the comfort of the lowly wayfarer who may be thrown upon our care, as for that of the rich and honored guest. Above all, it will ever esteem it a privilege to receive and entertain those who are of the common household of faith.

The hospitality which is most grateful to the recipient, shows itself in a courteous, yet unobtrusive, attention to the wants of the guest, and by making him feel fully at his ease and at home.

The Jews of old were commanded to show special attention and kindness to strangers sojourning among them, and it would be well if more of this hospitable and kindly spirit could be infused into our Christian communities.

Not in the great cities alone, but in many a place where there is far less excuse or apology for the neglect, rare opportunities of doing good are lost through selfish or indolent ignoring of the claims of the stranger or sojourner.

How many a youth, for instance, might have been saved from the paths of the destroyer, if some friendly hand had but beckoned him occasionally within the charmed precincts of a Christian home.

"Love ye, therefore, the stranger." And see to it, ye who have in your power to dispense the blessing of a Christian hospitality, that ye hear not at last the accusation, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in."

XVIII.

"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."

"Charity seeketh not her own."

"Let us therefore follow after the things . . . wherewith one may edify another."

Rom. xv. 2. I. Cor. xiii. 5. Rom. xiv. 19.

"Sheltered, but not to social duties lost ;

Secluded, but not buried."

It will be well, before closing this section, to glance at an error which is very apt to engraft itself upon the faithful fulfilment of home duties, which is the neglect of social work and of the calls of the Church.

A faithful pastor thus feelingly alludes to the

“selfishness which mothers of families—Christians beyond all doubt—are liable to contract” :

“Some excellent persons,” he observes, “are so short-sighted that they think their obligations are all discharged when domestic arrangements are kept in a proper train. They forget that the Master whom they serve has other duties for them, which should sometimes direct their steps abroad.

“There is so much to respect and love in the class here described, that it is an ungrateful task to draw attention to faults. They are keepers at home, active, prudent, and industrious; kind, gentle, and devout, never meddling with what does not concern them, and caring far more for the comfort and welfare of their households than for their own.

“This is all commendable and right. But suppose every Christian should do so much, and no more. If no one is willing to go beyond her own family circle, who will attend to the sick? Who will console the sorrowful? Who is to instruct the ignorant? Who will wait upon the dying? There must be some unselfish persons to be found, or all this work will be left undone.”

We cannot doubt that these words echo the sentiments of many a pastor who beholds Church work languishing which Christian women might be privileged to do.

Selfishness may seem a hard term to apply to the fault of such characters as are described above, yet surely that is but an outgrowth of self-love which regards only the obligations clustering about one's own hearthstone, and is indifferent to any claims beyond. Doubtless there are many so fettered with incessant home care, that no outside labors could be asked or expected of them; yet even these may send abroad their thoughts, sympathies, and prayers, keeping up their interest in the great field without that missionary spirit which should ever distinguish the members of the Church Christ.

SECTION IV.

Birth and Baptism
OF
CHILDREN.

Birth and Baptism of Children.

"Mysterious to all thought
A mother's prime of bliss,
When to her eager lips is brought
Her infant's thrilling kiss.
Oh, never shall it set, the sacred light
Which dawns that moment on her tender gaze
In the eternal distance blending bright,
Her darling's hope and hers, for love, and joy, and praise."

I.

"I have gotten a man from the Lord."

"Lo, children.....are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord."

"The children which God hath graciously given thy servant."

Gen. iv. 1. Ps. cxxvii. 3. Gen. xxxiii. 5.

Among the touchingly-beautiful descriptions of domestic life which the Bible contains, none speak more to the heart, because none are more true to nature, than those which tell of the birth of children.

The warm congratulations of the friends of Naomi, and of the neighbors and cousins of Elizabeth; the grateful joy of Hannah; the glad hope of the parents of Noah, as they ex-

claim, "This same shall comfort us;" the patriarch Jacob pausing in the midst of his heavy sorrow to bless his bereaved babe, and call him Benjamin; and, before all these, the rapture of the first mother, as she names her firstborn Cain, an acquisition, and exclaims, "I have gotten a man from the Lord!" These, and many similar portions of narrative, while each one conveys its own peculiar instruction, speak also to the quick sympathy of parents, causing the thoughts to turn fondly upon their own heritage and gift from the Lord.

It has ever been so through the generations of man, and let us thank God it is so still, that gloomy forebodings and carking cares, even the remembrance of recent anguish, are forgotten on receiving the new gift of life—"for joy that a man is born into the world."

It is a natural, and therefore a right, feeling which prompts the glad welcome to the newborn infant, and sends a thrill of thanksgiving and hope through the hearts of parents and friends. Surely, they can have small sympathy with the mind of the great All-Father, who can regard such an event with coldness, or look upon

little ones as an incumbrance. And is not that a weak faith which can see only the snares and pitfalls in the path of the young heir of immortality, the ills and sorrows which he must encounter here below and cannot look beyond, in the true spirit of the Christian mother, who

“Joys that one is born
 Into a world forgiven,
 Her Father’s household to adorn,
 And dwell with her in heaven.”

II.

“And man became a living soul.”
 “Who hath despised the day of small things?”
 “Out of weakness were made strong.”

Gen. ii. 7. Zech. iv. 10. Heb. xi. 34.

Amid the rejoicings with which the infant stranger is hailed, the outpouring of love which meets him, the tender hopes which cluster around him, oh, let it not be forgotten what a weighty trust is here committed to the parents’ keeping.

How truly says our Lord, “A man is born into the world,” reminding us in the midst of parental joy, of parental responsibility.

Yes, this unconscious babe, clinging in help-

lessness to the mother's breast, is an immortal being; "folded up" in that tiny frame are the human powers which shall rapidly expand, to prove a blessing or a curse upon the earth; mysteriously linked with that feeble spark of life, which one rude touch might quench, is the undying spirit which shall rejoice forever before the throne of God, or, wilfully straying from the paths of peace, shall dwell in eternal banishment from His presence.

In the forcible words of a living divine, "The child is the beginning of a being which is to last always, whose weal or woe is to run parallel with the existence of its Maker. It is a lamp kindled never to go out, a spring welling forth to flow forever, the shooting of a seed that shall not wither, nor cease to yield fruit eternally. What solemnity attaches to the beginning of such a creature! Who will look upon a child thoughtlessly, or treat it carelessly—spark of the heavenly beginning to shine upon the earth—germ of an existence that is to outlast the earth itself!"

III.

“I will save thy children.”

“Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me.”

“He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.”

Isa. xlix. 25. Matt. xix. 14. Mark, x. 16.

Thoughts, such as the above, of the never-dying soul, whose existence has now begun—recollections of the evil that is in the world upon which the young probationer has entered—of his inborn tendencies to evil—of the adversary who lieth in wait to destroy—oh! how justly might these overwhelm our hearts with alarm and distress, were there no refuge in which to place our imperilled offspring, no shield to protect them but an arm of flesh.

But blessed be the name of the Lord, the Redeemer of our souls, the arms of His mercy are outstretched to receive these precious objects of our solicitude. Now, as when on earth, He commands them to be brought unto Him, He blames those who would keep them from Him, He declares, “Of such is the kingdom of God.”

And lest this, His outward gesture and deed, should be misunderstood, He charged upon His

Church to receive, to feed and nurture these little ones, and to despise them not.

And, to use the words of Bishop Doane, "The Church is faithful to her Lord, in bringing little children to them in Infant Baptism. The infant sufferer is born into a world of sorrow and of sin, the heir at once of both. At the first threshold of his being the Saviour's spouse comes out to meet him.

"She bears him to the bleeding Cross; she laves him in the fountain which flows from it, 'for sin and for uncleanness'; she signs him with its sacred sign.

"It is the signature of heaven upon his brow, and in his heart. He is born again of water, and of the Spirit. He is the child of God, by adoption and grace. . . . She secures for him, while worldlings would be caring for his fortune or his rank, a title to the purchase of the Cross, a portion in the heritage of heaven. He is an heir, through hope, of the eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death of the only begotten Son of God."

IV.

"Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee."

"They brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; as it is written in the law of the Lord."

I. Sam. i. 28. Gen. xvii. 10. Luke, ii. 22, 23.

The baptism of our little ones, like every other act of covenant with God, has a twofold aspect. Not only do we crave for them the gracious smile of the Lord, not only do we seek for them safety and peace within the fold, but we bring them with the solemn vow of dedication upon our lips, yielding them to be the children of the Lord, pledging them to His faithful service.

This devotion of their children to Him in solemn covenant has been required by God of His people, in all ages, from the days of faithful Abraham. Surely the heart of every Christian parent will adoringly acknowledge the reasonableness of this demand, and obediently comply with it.

Let us rejoice that we are privileged to follow in the footsteps of Hannah of old; of her, also,

who was "blessed among women," and of all those faithful ones who, from age to age, have gone up to the temple with meek gratitude and fervent purpose, bearing their choicest treasure, the most precious gifts of the Lord, to present them unto Him.

And, while hastening to fulfil this our bounden duty and service, let our hearts go with the outward act in a solemn, earnest surrender of the child to God, to be no more our own, but the Master's; to be trained as His servant in all holy obedience to His will; yea, to be yielded un murmuringly at His call, though, as with Samuel, that call should be to minister before the Lord, apart from loving kindred, or though a sword should pierce through our souls, as the dedicated one is summoned to join the worshipping throng in a brighter sphere.

V.

"Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!"

"He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

Ex. ii. 9. Deut. xxxiii. 29. Ps. xl. 3.

“But happiest ye, who, sealed and blest,
Back to your arms your treasure take
With Jesus’ mark impressed
To nurse for Jesus’ sake ! ”

Let us picture to our minds the feelings of the mother of Moses, when the tide of anxiety which had overwhelmed her heart was suddenly turned, and the child for whom she had suffered a thousand torturing fears was rescued from his perilous exposure, taken, as an adopted son, into royal protection, and, wearing a new name, the token of his princely heirship, restored to her yearning bosom, to be nurtured as the privileged child of a king !

Hear, now, in this utterance of Pharaoh’s daughter, the voice of the Church, speaking in the name of her Lord to each Christian mother, as she receives again her infant from the Font, no longer a stranger, an alien, a child of wrath, but the child of God by adoption, the heir of the heavenly kingdom, to be nurtured as befits his glorious inheritance, under Almighty protection, with the help of Almighty grace.

And, as if this were not sufficient cause for boundless gratitude, it is added, “I will give

thee thy wages." The wages, the sure promises so dear to parents' hearts, that they do "not labor for naught"; that the children thus saved by the Lord, and nurtured according to His command, shall be as jewels in their crown of rejoicing forever !

VI.

"Feed my lambs."

"Watch, . . . as they that must give account."

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

John, xxi. 15. *Heb.* xiii. 17. *Eph.* vi. 4.

"Take this child and nurse it for Me." Oh, may we not forget that these consecrated little ones are to be reared for the Lord !

"Remember," so the Church admonishes, "that it is your part and duty to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath here made by you. Ye shall provide that he may learn all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, and that this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life."

Let us have always, therefore, printed in our

remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to our charge. They are the lambs of the Saviour's flock, which He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His blood.

Let us, therefore, be solemnly mindful of the end of our ministry toward these children of God, and see that we never cease our labor, our care, and diligence, until we have done all that lieth in us, according to our bounden duty, to bring them up in that faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of growth in Christ, that they shall be secure from error in doctrine, and free from all viciousness of life.

VII.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

"I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they *shall keep* the ways of the Lord." *Prov.* xxii. 6. *Phil.* i. 6. *Gen.* xviii. 19,

"Dispute the grace of baptism as some may, it is certain that God honors His sacrament, and that where the little one is brought to it in prayer and faith, and earnestly and judiciously

trained to live the rest of its life according to that beginning, there can hardly be too large expectations from God, nor failure or disappointment in them, in the after years of the baptized.

“The main point, so far as parents, sponsors, and friends are concerned, is, to have preëminent the desire that the child may be the Lord’s, and to have all the education and nurture bear witness to the supremacy of that desire.

“If an infant be brought to the sacrament merely in compliance with custom, and to receive a name, but with no large expectations of the grace of the Holy Spirit; and if, in succeeding years, while professedly desiring the salvation of their children, the real, prominent wish with parents is, that their sons may be shrewd, successful men of business, and their daughters accomplished, and handsomely settled, and the Searcher of hearts knows that it is so, and that all home influences are for the world, what wonder if there be no blessing, but the answer should be, not according to the request of the lips, but according to the multitude of the idols of the heart of those who seek unto Him!

“Let God see that, in all the parental rela-

tion, His favor is the ruling object of desire for the child, and the blessing will surely come; while the desire will mould the agencies by which it shall come, so that the training shall not defeat the wish. Children trained with such an aim may not indeed shine in gay society, nor form grand alliances, nor rank among the rich of this world, but *they shall* gain the blessing of the Lord, and life forevermore !”

VIII.

“The promise is unto you, and to your children.”

“Exceeding great and precious promises.”

“Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”

Acts, ii. 39. *II. Pet.* i. 4. *Numb.* xxiii. 19.

God's promises are yea and Amen, in Christ Jesus. “He covenants large blessings to believing parents, and He is a covenant-keeping God. He promises in baptism to receive the little one, to release him from sin, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of Heaven, and make him partake of everlasting life; which promise He, for His part, will most surely keep and perform to those who on their part fulfil the covenant of the Sacrament.

“Now no Christian parent will ever dream of boasting of faithfulness, or of meriting eternal life for children; salvation is all of grace. Yet parents may know, that amid much of frailty and sin, they do sincerely and preëminently labor to be faithful in the covenant,—that they have earnestly sought its blessings for themselves and theirs, and valued God’s favor as the best portion for all; and, where there is this consciousness, it should give humble, yet strong trust, that God for Christ’s sake will fulfil to them and theirs the promises of the covenant of grace.

“If none but the perfect could claim these promises, they would be all unclaimed. It is to those who are perfect *in Christ*, that they are yea and Amen. Therefore, believing parents, who have good hope for themselves, may be encouraged to hope from God’s covenanted word, that their children also shall go with them to the promised land, and that God will not easily leave them behind in Egypt, nor cast them off forever.

“It would be presumptuous so to build on this foundation as to say absolutely, as was said

to the mother of St. Augustine, the child of so many prayers and tears cannot be lost; or, for the graceless son to say, I shall never perish, for my parents pray for me. Yet these are only extremes, and perversions of a right faith. God makes ability and responsibility commensurate; nor does He make us the authors of being without giving us power to render that being blessed."

IX.

"I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring."

"The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God."

"As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord."

Isa. xliv. 3. Deut. xxx. 6. Isa. lix. 21.

"It is the part of the parent to remember that 'regeneration' in the Standards of the Church, does not mean what is called 'a change of heart.' In saying that a child is regenerated in baptism, we do not say that if left to himself, untaught and uncared for, he will not go to destruction, nor fall before temptation. This

sacrament works no such magical change. But the sacrament *does* bring the child into covenant with God; and into the Church,—the visible family of the Redeemer; and the Divine Head of that family bestows the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, by which the faithful instructions of his earthly parents will be brought to a saving effect. There remains in the baptized child, as truly as in any other, that tendency to sin which is born in us all, the same blindness to truth, the same aversion to duty. But he is in *this* different from others, that to him the promise of the Spirit, and of His help to enlighten, to convince of sin, and to renew unto righteousness, belongs of *covenant right*. This promise we can, and ought to plead with God for our children, and this promise He for His part will most surely keep and perform."

X.

"Pour out thine heart . . . before the face of the Lord; lift up thine hands toward Him, for the life of thy young children."

"He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him, and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations."

"And Abraham said unto God, Oh, that Ishmael might

live before Thee! And God said, As for Ishmael, I have heard thee."

Sam. ii. 19. Deut. vii. 9. Gen. xvii. 18-20.

In a previous section we have alluded to the privilege of prayer for our children, as one of which the most thoughtless parents are fain, at times, to avail themselves. Oh, then, how unutterably precious must it be to the heart of the believing father or mother!

How does it strengthen our faith in the promises to plead them with God at the mercy-seat! How does it soothe our anxieties for our precious ones, to commend them, again and again, unto Him who is able to keep them from falling!

Let us remember that prayer for our children is not only our privilege, but our solemn duty. For thus saith the Lord, in whose covenant mercy we place our hope, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." "God forbid," then, "that we should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for" those whom He has committed unto us, and whom we are seeking to lead in "the good and the right way."

Among the many texts upon which we may

draw for our encouragement in this duty, let us consider one which is peculiarly our own, appealing, as it does, to the very instincts of parental love as an argument that the Almighty Father will not cast out our prayer. "I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you. . . . If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!"—*Luke*, xi. 9-13.

XI.

"If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us."

"Covet earnestly the best gifts."

"Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. . . . But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask."

I. John, v. 14. *I. Cor.* xii. 31. *Matt.* xx. 20-22.

"Ye know not what ye ask." Ah, how much oftener than we dream of may it be the case that our heart's desire and prayer for our loved ones, "uttered or unexpressed," may be for that which, if granted, would effectually blight our

fondest and purest hopes concerning them, and prove a curse rather than a blessing!

Let us adapt to our need the fervent words of Bishop Andrews: O Lord, Thou understandest, Thou canst accomplish, Thou dost truly and earnestly desire the safety and good of these, *Thy children*. We have neither understanding to discern, nor power to effect, nor, as we ought to have, even will to desire and seek their true and best good; do Thou, therefore, O God, of Thy unspeakable tenderness and love, vouchsafe to direct and guide, to govern and dispose of them, that they may be Thine forever!

XII.

"The Lord hath been mindful of us; He will bless us; . . . He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children."

"I will establish my covenant . . . to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

Ps. cxv. 12-14. *Gen.* xvii. 7. *Ps.* ciii. 13.

No space has been given in these pages to direct argument against the objections raised by the opponents of infant baptism; and it is not likely that this work will fall into the hands of

any such. Yet it is possible that among its readers may be some, who, while allowing the duty, and availing themselves of the privilege of bringing their children to this sacrament, may not have been led heretofore to place that strong reliance upon the promises of God, made therein, in which they would be most surely justified; and consequently have not taken to themselves the comfort which, if they be true Christian parents, their covenant God does most truly design for them.

To such it may appear that we have taken too strong ground in interpreting the passages quoted; that we are not warranted in building upon them the edifice of so firm and joyful a hope concerning the salvation of our children.

Dear Christian friends, you are entreated to read over, once more, the texts of Holy Writ which have been collated in this section. Ponder them with the comment which the Church herself furnishes, and see if you can fail to derive from them such assurance of hope as shall be an unspeakable comfort to your souls, amid the anxieties which must be inseparable from the parental relation so long as we and our loved

ones are tossed on the waves of this troublesome world.

Consider, further, the verses which preface these remarks. See how, in these again, our God recognizes the principle of parental affection which Himself has implanted, and employs it to interpret His own everlasting love for His people.

“You and your children.” “I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee,” spake the Lord to Abraham, and are not we, which be of faith, blessed with faithful Abraham in this, as in other things? *Could* we deem ourselves fully blessed in this life, in that which our children shared not?

Let not, then, our faith be slow to admit, concerning our children who have been received into the flock of Christ, that “it is the Father’s good pleasure to give them the kingdom.” Let us thankfully labor as “workers together with God” for these souls which are “His husbandry,” which are “His building,” with the blessed hope in our hearts that “our sons shall grow up as the young plants, and our daughters be as the polished corners of the Temple,” to His eternal praise.

XIII.

"They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

"Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."

"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children."

Isa. lxx. 23. I. Cor. vii. 14. Ps. ciii. 17.

We cannot close this section without introducing the following passage from the writings of the "Chrysostom" of our Mother Church :

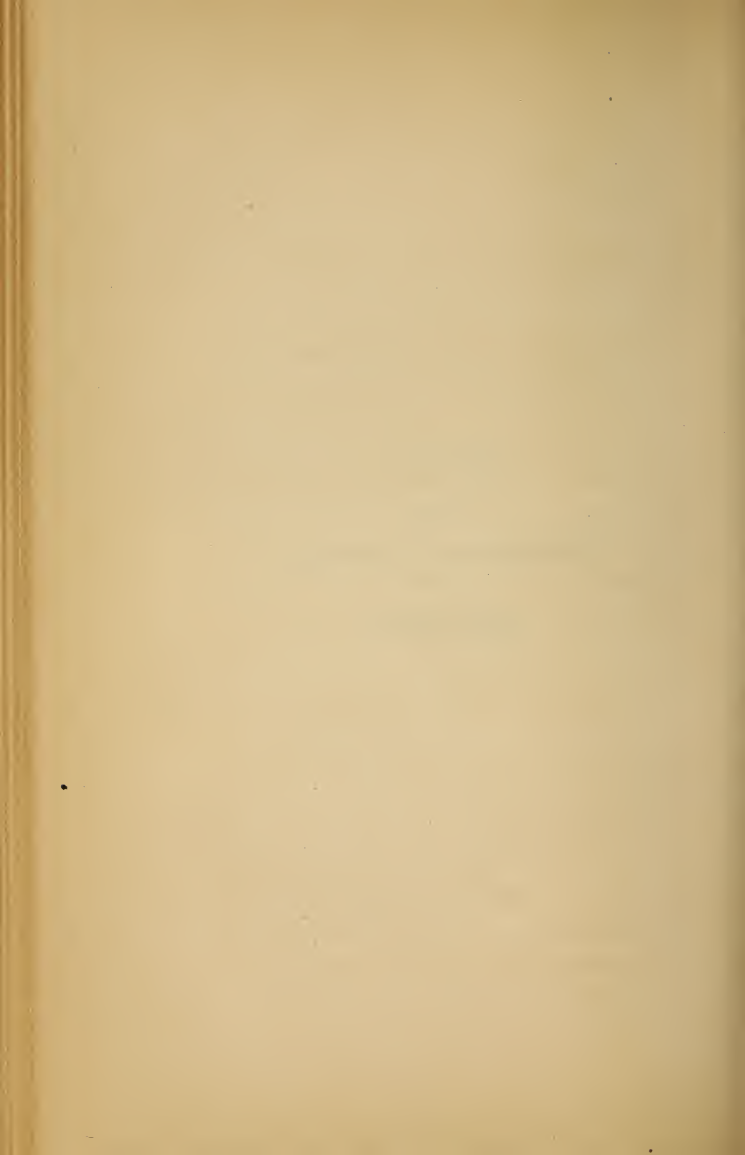
"We hear it spoken, in our books of religion, that the faith of the parents is imputed to their children to good purposes, and that a good husband sanctifies an ill wife, and a believing wife an unbelieving husband, and either of them makes the children to be sanctified, 'else were they unclean and unholy; that is, the very designing children to the service of God is a sanctification of them, and therefore St. Jerome calls Christian children *candidatos fidei Christianæ*. And if this very designation of them makes them holy—that is, acceptable to God, entitled to the promises, partakers of the covenant, within the condition of sons—much more shall it be effec-

tual to greater blessings when the parents take care that the children shall be actually pious, full of sobriety, full of religion; then it becomes a holy house, a chosen generation, an elect family.

“And then there can no evil happen to them, but such which will bring them nearer to God; that is, no cross but the cross of Christ, no misfortune but that which shall lead to felicity; and if any semblance of a curse happens in the generations, it is but like the anathema of a sacrifice—not an accursed, but a devoted thing—for so the sacrifice upon whose neck the priest’s knife doth fall, is so far from being accursed that it helps to get a blessing to all that join in the oblation. So, every misfortune that shall discompose the ease of a pious and religious family, shall but make them fit to be presented unto God. . . . No evil can curse the family whose stock is pious, and whose ‘branches are holiness unto the Lord.’ If any leaf or any boughs shall fall untimely, God shall gather them up and place them in His temple, or at the foot of His throne; and that family must needs be blessed whom infelicity itself cannot make accursed.”

SECTION V.

Religious Training
OF
CHILDREN.



Religious Training of Children.

“That call not education which decries
God and His truth, content the seed to strew
Of moral maxims, and the mind imbue
With elements, which form the worldly wise.
So call the training which can duly prize
Such lighter lore, but *chiefly* holds to view
What God requires us to *believe* and *do* ;
And notes man’s end, and shapes him for the skies.”

I.

“Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

“Oh, my Lord, teach us what we shall do unto the child. How shall we order the child, and what shall we do unto him?”

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith.”

Eph. vi. 4. *Judg.* xiii. 8-12. *James* i. 5-6.

From the waters of baptism we receive our children, as it were, a second time from the Lord, with the renewed injunction, “Train them up in the way they should go.” “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” With what earnestness, then, should every Christian parent seek to know the mind and will of the

Lord in this matter, breathing the prayer of Manoah, "Oh, my Lord, teach us what we shall do unto the child."

And, as in Manoah's case, the prayer of faith shall receive an answer; the wisdom which we feel we so greatly lack our God will surely bestow upon every diligent and humble seeker.

In this solemn matter, as in all things that pertain unto life and godliness, the Sacred Word must be our guide and counsellor. We may well believe that "the Christian mother may be 'thoroughly furnished' for her important duties by a diligent study of that Book which is able to make both herself and her children wise unto salvation."

It will be our aim in this section to collate such passages of Scripture as seem to throw more immediate light upon our duty in the nurture and education of our children, and may our reflections upon them be blessed to our help and guidance in the momentous work of rearing the children of the Lord.

II.

"He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

"Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

"Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters . . . *even* every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory."

Matt. x. 37 I. Cor. x. 14. Isa. xliii. 6-7.

A few solemn questions are suggested by these verses, for the consideration of every parent.

Are we looking upon these children as exclusively our own, or as the children of the Lord?

Do we pursue their education and training as a means to their usefulness in God's service, or simply that they may minister to our comfort, our honor, and our pride?

Is our affection for these beloved ones subordinate to the love of God, or are we, in this respect, guilty of setting up idols in our hearts?

Do we, in all our thoughts and purposes concerning them, "give them up" to the will of Him who formed them for His glory, and by whose Name they are called, or do we in the secret of our hearts "keep them back" from such high devotion, indulging fond schemes of our

own for their earthly happiness and aggrandizement, and thus for our delight in them ?

The candid answer which conscience renders to these inquiries will determine whether the training which we are giving to the children intrusted to us be of a religious or a worldly nature.

For, what is meant by training a child ? To train is to discipline, to practise, to instruct for some future struggle ; as soldiers are trained and disciplined before going into conflict, or are prepared by slight engagements before they are brought into a pitched battle. Evidently, then, training implies some purpose, some object ; if there be no definite object enshrined in the parent's heart, the training will be irregular, desultory, inefficient, or, more likely, the child will be untrained.

Our baptized children, in fulfilment of the vows we have uttered in their name, are to be trained, oh, let us remember, as the enlisted soldiers of Christ—the sworn servants of the Most High. Each is pledged at his Baptism to confess Christ crucified, and to fight manfully under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil.

Each parent and sponsor not only pledges his child to this, but pledges himself to train and instruct him to do this, so soon as he shall be able to learn.

The Christian child, then, "is to be educated not for itself, not for the parent, not for the world, but for God who gave it. Devoted to Him from the birth, brought up in His fear, instructed in His laws, trained to obey His Word, to be actively engaged in His service, to live to His glory."

III.

"In the morning sow thy seed."

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."

"Babes in Christ."

Eccl. xi. 6. *Matt.* xviii. 10. *I. Cor.* iii. 1.

"This culture, this training of the youthful heir of immortality," remarks a wise and reverend writer, "ought to commence at a far earlier period than people are commonly aware of. In husbandry our care begins long before the process of vegetation is at all apparent. We water the ground before the first shoot appears, and from the moment it does appear our carefulness knows not intermission.

“And so it ought to be in God’s husbandry. The infant mind puts forth its shoots with the first dawnings of sensation, and at this period it is that the most lasting and valuable impressions may be made. The animal and sensitive parts of our nature are then in full vigor, and as these are then treated the future happiness or future misery of the human being will, to an incalculable extent, be determined.

“For it may be safely affirmed, on the authority and from the experience of those who are best qualified to speak on such subjects, that, even before reason is perceptibly unfolded, the appetites, the passions, the affections, take their bias toward evil or toward good.”

IV.

“But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, . . . So the woman abode . . . until she had weaned him.”

“We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.”

“For who hath despised the day of small things?”

I. Sam. i. 22, 53 *I. Thess.* ii. 7. *Zech.* iv. 10.

“Can a woman forget her sucking child?”

. . . “Yea, they *may* forget,” is the response

given to this question in the Word of Truth, and too often do we seem to behold the assertion realized. Too often do we see tender, impressible infancy intrusted to such care and guardianship as betokens, if not utter negligence in the mother, at least an entire forgetfulness of all but the mere animal nature and wants of her child.

Says Dr. Vinton: "The duty of bringing up a child in the nurture of the Lord, begins with the very commencement of the parental relation. In the cradle,—sooner than that,—in the first maternal embrace, for aught that can be shown to the contrary, there may be, with the pressure of those loving arms, an influence that shall impress the soul just shaped for eternity.

"In the mingling glances which shoot from those eyes looking into each other, why may not the mother's gaze, glistening with the vivid fire of parental love, waken magnetic impulses in the breast of the child, as well as the lambent light of his own laughing look rouse up in the mother's bosom a stronger yearning of tenderness? In the secrecy of that nursing chamber there may thus be going on an intercourse of

unutterable power, to stir the leading impulses of the whole future life.

“If such a thing be even possible, and it is more than that, it should teach every Christian mother the sacred value of her early influence, and should warn her not to delegate to a cold-hearted substitute the paramount office which God and nature have devolved implicitly upon herself.

“Throughout the whole period of infancy, the Christian mother has the same responsibility, and greater facilities for training the moral nature of her child. Before the thinking powers are developed the sensibilities have their activity, and make up the infant’s life. These may be excited and swayed in many ways. The sweet dreams of his mother’s lap may be associated in his mind forever with the music of the saints, with which he was sung to sleep. The calmness of maternal piety, bearing with his fretful temper, may keep in the back-ground a crowd of passions that might have been angered by a nurse’s petulance.”

V.

"Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child."

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

"By nature the children of wrath."

Prov. xxii. 15. *Ps.* li. 5. *Eph.* ii. 3.

In considering the training which should be given to a child, it is of vast importance to have clearly in our minds the nature of the being we are to work upon, and the difficulties and hindrances we must expect to meet with.

To the mother, gazing upon the innocent, peaceful face of her child, in early infancy, it seems hard to realize the solemn truth which is most plainly inculcated in the verses cited above, and in many similar passages. Hence many too easily fall in with the fanciful theories and educational systems so prevalent in our day; which, being based on false, unscriptural views, must result in failure and disappointment.

The advocates of such theories are fond of describing the infant mind as a pure white tablet, upon which we may inscribe what we please. If it be a page without an inscription, experience proves that it will take some

impressions far more readily than others. It is easier to inscribe thereon the love of pleasure of the world, than the love of God; easier to inculcate rebellion against authority than submission to it.

While then we delight ourselves with the artlessness of childhood, and its winsome ways, let us not forget to be ever prayerfully on the watch, as those whose eyes have been enlightened by the unerring Word of Truth, for the buddings of that evil nature with which we are warned we must contend.

Underneath this seeming guilelessness lurks that "carnal mind," in warring against which the child of God is to find his life-long struggle.

Of what can that Christian parent be thinking, who can find subject for amusement in the early indications of the presence of this foe; instead of watching to cripple its strength, and arm the babe in Christ most carefully against it!

VI.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee."

“Children, obey *your* parents in all things : for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”

Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3. *Col.* iii. 20.

Again, and more solemnly, must the question return, What are the Divinely-appointed methods by the use of which we may hope to train up our offspring in the way they should go ?

Of these, second only in importance to the covenant-grace of God humbly sought for them in the Sacrament, we must rank parental discipline and authority.

Some writer remarks, “It might almost be said that to the infant mind the *fifth* is the first and great commandment—that it is the germ of all its discipline, the scale by which it ascends to God.”

To see the force of this observation, let us consider in what true religion mainly consists. Is it not in yielding our will to the will of God, our reason to His guidance ? Is it not in the *obedience* of faith ?

Now, to the infant, the parent is in God’s stead, and the great lesson of submission—of bending his own will—must be learned in acts of submission to this Divinely-appointed authority.

Must it not be comparatively easy for a child early trained to implicit obedience to yield in obedience to the will of his Heavenly Father, as it is revealed to his expanding intellect?

To "honor and obey their father and mother," then, is the first lesson we are to teach our children, as the very foundation of a true Christian nurture. This discipline should begin as early as possible; indeed, with the first dawning of intelligence. As soon as the little one is capable of noticing a look or tone of disapproval, it is a proper subject for parental control. No one who has not witnessed the experiment tried with firm, patient, prayerful effort, would believe at what a tender age an infant may be taught to recognize and submit to a tone of authority.

VII.

"I have told him that I will judge his house for ever . . . because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not."

"How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken Me."

"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."

I. Sam. iii. 13. *Jer.* v. 7. *Prov.* xxix. 17.

The story of Eli, carefully perused, cannot

fail to impress a candid mind with the truth that parents are required by God to rule their own households ; to guide their children by a wise and firm restraint ; to demand, and if needful, to enforce, their obedience.

It was not because he did not instruct his children diligently in the law of God, or seek to persuade them to observe it ; not because he did not pray for them ; not because he set them an evil example, that the heavy judgment of God fell upon Eli ; but because he did not enforce his teachings ; “ he restrained them not.”

Nor is this a solitary example bearing upon this important subject. Holy Writ is full of warnings and commands in regard to it.

“ Withhold not correction from the child,” we are told ; as if in so doing we should withhold what was most truly a blessing.

And again, to the same purport—“ He that spareth his rod, hateth his son ; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”

And again, St. Paul demands, “ What son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? ”

In these days we might rather ask, What son is he that *is* subjected to a wholesome discipline,

and constrained to reverence and obey his parents.

It would seem, in looking around upon the youth of our time, and especially of this, our boasted land of freedom, as if we had indeed fallen upon the "perilous" times of the last days, when men should be "disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."

The spirit of insubordination, misnamed *independence*, is a crying evil in our age; and it takes its rise, and is nurtured, as, alas! so many social evils are, in the bosom of the family—of so-called Christian families.

Let parents awake to the earnest conviction that parental rule is no fit matter for idle jest; the office of "governor" and head of a household is not one whose responsibilities may be lightly trifled with.

VIII.

"Lovers of their own selves."

"What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?"

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

II. Tim. iii. 2. *Prov.* xxxi. 2. *Prov.* xix. 18.

The perversity and waywardness of the child

is not the only nor perhaps the chief hindrance to a mother, in the exercise of a firm, conscientious discipline.

To see her child merry and happy is her hourly delight; its gleeful laugh is music in her ears; in correcting it she inflicts much more pain upon her own feelings than upon the child; to "spare her soul" the sound of his piteous "crying," she will refrain from thwarting his fancies or unreasonable desires, and neglect the needful measures of restraint.

Alas, fond mother! Too surely will this weak self-indulgence bring forth its legitimate fruit; for the child thus "left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame."

In nine cases out of ten his conduct is "bitterness to her that bore him;" in the natural course of cause and effect, the neglected child will "consume the eyes, and grieve the heart" of the weak, doting parent.

In calling this laxity of discipline self-indulgence, and attributing it to self-love, we speak advisedly.

It has been most truly remarked, "The fondness of some mothers for their children is sim-

ply the selfish gratification of an animal passion, regardless of anything but its own present enjoyment, and supremely regardless of the ultimate happiness of its object. It is the transferred idolatry of a selfish nature to a second self."

And, in the exercise of this instinctive maternal fondness, in utter indifference to the needs of the child's immortal being, the rational mother can lay claim to no higher sentiment than is displayed by the poor, unreasoning brute who exhibits the same beautiful instinct in the care and defence of her offspring.

Let the Christian mother regard her child not only as a part of her own life, in the strong natural affection she bears toward him, but as the mother of Samuel expressed herself, the "son of her vows" as well, of vows which may require much self-denial and painful effort on her part, but which must be fulfilled, as she values the eternal well-being of the child entrusted to her.

IX.

"He that ruleth (let him do it), with diligence."

"Do as thou hast said."

“A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

Rom. xii. 8. *I. Kings*, xvii. 13. *James*, i. 8.

In order that discipline may be of any avail, it is necessary that it be firm, steady, and uniform; not depending upon the caprice or circumstances of the moment, but, as the child will soon learn to perceive, upon high and unwavering principle.

What can be more injurious to a child than to be at times severely punished for acts of disobedience, such as, on other occasions, and for reasons quite beyond his comprehension, are allowed to pass unnoticed beneath the parent's very eye?

Of course the child, not knowing when the parent may be in the humor to enforce a command, will often disobey in hope of escaping the threatened penalty, and when punishment follows, it will irritate in proportion as it was unexpected.

A great deal may be accomplished in the guidance and moulding of children, in minor matters, by persuasive tact, without positive commands and rules.

In many points, in the daily management of

active, heedless children, there is more call for the patient "line upon line, and precept upon precept," of gentle admonition, than for the direct exercise of authority.

A wise parent will avoid unnecessary collision with the will of a child; but at the same time, when a direct command is given, will never allow it to be evaded, or disregarded.

It is wonderful with what ingenuity a very young child, even, will attempt to break through the parental authority; by watching an opportunity when the parent is thought to be off from her guard; by playful, coaxing arts, to avert displeasure; or by venturing only a little way on the path of disobedience.

In the case of sickly, nervous children, it is judged by many that the exercise of a firm authority is harsh and uncalled for; that such a suffering little one should be allowed its own way when it cannot be coaxed into compliance with the wishes of its parents.

On the contrary, it is the greatest mercy to such a child to teach it to yield implicit obedience to authority. This habit once formed, the child may be saved from much suffering by

the interposition of the calm, steady tone of command.

X.

“Provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

“Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all.”

“Grievous words stir up anger.”

Col. iii. 21. I. Thess. v. 14. Prov. xv. 1.

In speaking of parental authority, we are by no means to picture to our minds a stern, unbending disciplinarian, with uplifted rod, ready to check all the gushing impulses of childhood.

This species of government is as far removed from the spirit of the Bible as the laxity and fond indulgence which it so severely reprehends.

Nor is it often found necessary, in a well-governed family, to resort to severe punishment; far less frequently will this occur than where the authority is fitfully asserted and irregularly maintained.

We cannot too carefully remember that the discipline of a Christian household must be gentle and loving, as well as firm and steady. St. Paul twice utters the injunction, “Provoke not your children to wrath,” which may help us

to realize how prone are even affectionate and well-meaning parents to fall into this error.

A harsh tone in commanding, or "grievous words" mingling with a needed admonition or deserved rebuke, is too often a source of real unhappiness to an amiable child, and of angry and rebellious emotions in the case of a stout-hearted offender.

Besides, let us not forget that our children can readily discern between reproofs given in irritation or resentment and those which are prompted by love and administered with Christian gentleness. The former can but arouse the evil passions of the child and diminish the influence of the parent, while the latter will seldom fail to touch the heart.

As has been well said, "Commands which evidently flow from love naturally dispose the heart to obey; a child sees no hope of escaping from a system of discipline that seems to arise from the tenderness of a parent."

A supreme love for the souls of our children, and a deep sense of our responsibility to God, can alone inspire and enable us to maintain that gentle, yet firm, authority which we have

endeavored to describe, and which is a most invaluable aid in "training up a child in the way he should go."

XI.

"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak."

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

"The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

I. Cor. ix. 22. Rom. xv. 1. Jam. v. 11.

A ready sympathy with the feelings of children, with their discouragements and perplexities, is most needful in order to guide and govern them judiciously.

We who have attained to maturity in the Christian life through years of experience, and are become in a measure accustomed to its discipline, are too apt to forget the roughness of the way to tender and untried feet, and to be impatient with the restive movements of the little one who is learning to tread this difficult path of self-denial and self-control.

Let us recall the long suffering of our God in dealing with our waywardness and rebellion, and learn to be forbearing toward those who are just starting in the same narrow way.

We should be watchfully on our guard against discouraging children by constant fault-finding, while at the same time we fail to notice their childish efforts to do right. Why should we not as readily bestow the smile and word of approval, when they are evidently trying to do well, as the frown and censure when anything is seen amiss? It is true there is danger, with some dispositions, of fostering a love of praise and approbation, yet it is seldom that a mother's quiet approval can do injury in this respect, and we are too apt to err on the other side.

Another method of discouraging children is, as it has been well expressed, "by magnifying offences, and chastening the conscience with upbraidings." To assure a little offender, as has sometimes been done, that "he is the worst child we have ever seen," or otherwise to express astonishment and disgust at his depravity, is, to say the least, unbecoming in one who is also "compassed with infirmity," and who many a time, when the foot hath slipped, hath by redeeming grace been lifted up. Rather let us assure the erring little one that "no temptation hath befallen him but such as is common" to

all, and hasten to meet the first symptom of contrition for the fault with the promise of forgiveness, and of that helping grace for the future, which it is his, by covenant mercy, to ask and to rely upon.

XII.

“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.”

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame.”

“I will spare him, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

Isa. lxvi. 13. *Ps.* ciii. 13, 14. *Mal.* iii. 17.

Having touched upon the point of sympathy for our children, as for young and struggling Christians, “babes in Christ,” we are tempted to introduce the following passage from the writings of a friend, at the risk of diverging from the course of our subject, so well does it represent the feelings which must be uppermost in the heart of every earnest-minded Christian parent :

“The true Christian sympathy of a parent for a child is the closest assimilation to the love of our Heavenly Father for His earthly children that our far-off world affords. It is this *knowing*

of the frame—this remembering that their children are frail in body and spirit, which makes the sympathy of Christian parents so much above that of the fondest father, and the most idolizing mother, who are destitute of an immortal interest in their offspring. The first, in view of the sinfulness and weakness of their children, seek for their spirits the renewing and strengthening influences of the Holy Ghost, and for their perishing bodies look for a resurrection to immortal youth and beauty. Having felt their own wants, they feel those of their children; and having found the fulness of God, they would in faith take them to the same exhaustless supply, believing that if they seek first for them the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all other things necessary will be added. What is the love of the worldly-minded parent compared to this?

“And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt her new-fledged offspring to the skies,
They try each art, reprove each dull delay,
Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way.”

XIII.

“Honor to whom honor *is due*.”

“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God.”

“Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”

Rom. xiii. 7. Lev. xix. 32. II. Pet. ii. 10.

We are carefully to teach our children that the spirit of the fifth commandment requires not only a literal obedience to parents, but also that we “honor and obey the civil authority, submit ourselves to all our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters, and order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters.”

And these, like most other duties, be it remembered, are most efficiently inculcated by example. If children are accustomed to hear the disrespectful epithet applied to one in authority, or the cold or sarcastic criticism passed upon the spiritual overseer; or if they witness manifestations of that proud, levelling spirit which rebels against existing distinctions in society, how shall we imbue them with sentiments of reverence and subordination?

XIV.

“Is it well with the child?”

“I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless.”

“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

II. Kings, iv. 26. *I. Thess.* v. 23. *Luke*, ii, 52.

Having dwelt upon the importance of discipline as a most necessary forerunner and assistant of all true Christian nurture, we come now to consider more directly the *education* of our children.

This subject, in accordance with the threefold nature of man, must resolve itself into three branches, distinct, yet intimately connected, and each demanding its due share of careful attention.

To develop the physical constitution of our little ones in its due proportions, so that they may grow up with sound, able, and healthy bodies, what tender and watchful care, what wise and enlightened judgment is needed!

Again, the development of the mental powers is a subject which has called forth volumes of thought and theory; and no wonder, for it is a matter deeply affecting the weal of individuals

and of the State; with what interest, therefore, should parents address themselves to the work of expanding and improving the mind and intellect of their children to the utmost of the ability and opportunity which God has given them!

And yet these—the care and nurture of the body—the cultivation of the intellectual powers—must shrink into insignificance compared with that vast and momentous work, the rearing of an immortal *soul* to the measure of the stature of the perfect man in Christ! Not only is this the object of paramount importance, but neither of the other branches can be properly carried on as befits an immortal being, without regard to this “one thing needful”—the training of the soul into habits of piety and holiness, into a state of meetness for the heavenly inheritance.

And, on the other hand, a due regard to religious principles and practice compels attention to the body and to the mental faculties, that the child of God may be “ready both in body and soul” to serve Him, and may love Him “with all the mind and strength,” as well as with the spiritual nature.

We cannot pamper and indulge, neither can we neglect and stunt the body, without injury to the soul, and it is no less certain that we cannot overstrain the intellectual powers, nor neglect to use and improve them, without similar hurt and hindrance.

Plainly, therefore, that is miscalled education, and is all unworthy of the name, which concerns the intellect alone, alas! how often to the total neglect of the soul's needs, and most culpable ignoring of the laws of physical health and growth.

Let it be our aim and endeavor to educate the whole being of our children—each faculty with which God has endowed them in its proper place and proportion; and to educate these in accordance with the laws ordained by Him who made them.

XV.

“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.”

“That their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord.”

“Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things

from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Isa. xxviii 9. Deut. xxxi. 13. Luke, x. 21.

The period at which it is proper to attempt imparting direct religious instruction must vary, of course, with the capacity of the child.

Of this we may be sure, that we cannot begin too early; as soon as the intelligence is so far unfolded as to be able to receive any abstract truth, we may safely attempt the lodgment of truths Divine.

Some would object to this, as to a premature forcing of the intellect, but the case is by no means the same.

A child receives and acts upon facts concerning the affairs of this life long before he could reason upon them, or comprehend any philosophical explanation of them; so also, by Divine help, may the simple facts of revealed religion be received, yes, and acted upon, by a mere infant, really influencing its conduct, while yet, given in the form of *doctrine*, the mysteries of the faith would indeed be utterly beyond his grasp.

"As mysteries," it has been well observed, "they transcend the comprehension of a ser-

aph ; as facts, they are most of them level to the capacity of a child, and admirably adapted to engage his earliest affiance and love."

As soon, then, as a little one can speak intelligently of any absent friend, let him learn of the existence of his Almighty, Unseen Friend. As soon as he becomes familiar with the surroundings of his earthly home, let him hear of and begin to love his bright inheritance above. Teach the meaning of the attitude of prayer as soon as he observes it at the family altar, and teach him his own little prayer as soon as his lisping tongue can frame the words. Thus, with God's blessing, may we hope that when his expanding mind shall be able to receive doctrinal truth, it may fall upon good, that is, *prepared* ground, take root, and bring forth abundant fruit in a holy, devoted life.

XVI.

"She took him up with her, . . . and brought him unto the house of the Lord . . . and the child was young. . . . And he worshipped the Lord there,"

"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

"Gather the people . . . assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts."

I. Sam. i. 24, 28. Ps. lxxxvii. 2. Joel, ii. 16.

Every one who assents to the foregoing remarks will acknowledge the importance of accustoming children, as early as possible, to attendance in the house of the Lord.

The age at which this is practicable will depend, far more than the period for beginning religious instruction at home, upon the peculiarities of the child. To compel a restless little being to sit during a long service, of the nature of which he can have but a faint conception, to his own exceeding weariness and disgust and to the disturbance of surrounding worshippers, cannot be regarded as of any use to the child, and can only be justified when the mother, or some member of the family, would otherwise be detained from the place of worship.

In such a case it is wise to provide a picture book, a pencil and paper, or something of the kind, to occupy the attention of the child and prevent his forming a dislike for the courts of the Lord's house.

When, however, a little one is pleased with being taken to Church, and, in any case, as soon as he is old enough to understand an explanation of the holy custom, great pains

should be taken to interest him in the public worship.

He should be taught that it is his Heavenly Father's house, to which we go to pray and hear His Word ; that it is good to be there, and that God is pleased to see him there, quiet and attentive. As he grows older, let the child feel that it is his precious privilege to make one of the worshipping congregation ; teach him to mingle his infant voice with theirs in the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and other simple parts of the service ; and as soon as he begins to read, though imperfectly, give him a Prayer Book of his own, and assist him in finding the places.

Children may thus, by God's grace, be early taught to "love the habitation of His house, and the place where His honor dwelleth ;" and it is not for us to measure the good which they may receive through this appointed means of grace.

How often has it been remarked of some restless, active child, who was seldom still at home, that it was "surprising to see how quietly it behaved in church." Who shall tell how much the holy influences of the place where God

draws near to His people may affect the heart of the merest infant ?

XVII.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following."

"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?" . . . "Then ye shall let your children know."

"Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Ps. xlviii. 12, 13. *Ex.* xii. 26, with *Josh.* iv. 22. *Jer.* vi. 16.

It was well said by a mother, when asked of the system she had pursued with a child, lovely in his infant piety, "Indeed, it was not I who trained him, but the Church."

The report of the Committee on Christian Education appointed by our General Convention, thus speaks of the system laid down by the Prayer Book :

"A child being made in baptism 'a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,' is to be trained up as such from infancy, in the knowledge and practice of his baptismal covenant with God. The duty of so training him is laid upon his parents, his sponsors, and his pastor. For their help and

guidance a catechism is provided, which is not only doctrinal but practical; and the Liturgy, the Sacred Year, and all the godly customs appointed, as well as the whole tone and spirit of his life in the Church, are all homogeneous therewith—are all parts of the one great and well-tried system under which a child can be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life. Every service he joins in and every day he keeps, every contact of any kind with the Church, which is always faithful to her Lord in her order and worship, helps to store his memory and his heart with impressions and associations and knowledge no less valuable than those which he gains when consciously a scholar.

“Now, this being so, it follows that the true Prayer Book ideal of a Christian education in these days would be one in which home and school and parish, parents, sponsors, pastor, and teachers, each in turn, would do their duty to the child with constant remembrance of his baptismal covenant, both as to its privileges and responsibilities. It would be a training in which the teachings and customs of our household of the faith would be allowed to have their due in-

fluence and their complete harmony. And surely, it must commence in the home. When your committee think what the 'daily life of a Christian child' may be in a home in which the Church and her heavenly ways are appreciated and loved by old and young; in which parents and children are all working out their salvation side by side; in which the very days, as they come and go, are charged with reminders and helps in holy living; in which the tone is devout, humble, loving, believing, as the Church would train her members to be, they are sorry to know that few of Christ's little ones among us *are* so nurtured—sorry to have to turn aside to account for so sad a fact."

XVIII.

"Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents."

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls."

"Know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

Cant. i. 8. *Heb.* xiii. 17. *I. Thess.* v. 12, 13.

In order to carry out the system of the Church in the nurture of children, it is most desirable

that they should be kept under the eye of the pastor, be taught to recognize themselves as members of his flock, and to look up to him with affectionate reverence.

In this view may be seen the importance of placing little ones early in the Sunday school, even when the home religious instruction is most carefully conducted; though, indeed, there are few parents who will not thankfully avail themselves of the Christian coöperation of a Sunday school teacher in their responsible task.

As members of the Sunday school, children are brought more closely under the notice of the pastor than they could be by means of his round of pastoral visiting, and they have the benefit of his frequent catechising and instructions.

A reverend English prelate thus remarks on this important point:

“If, at the age when the mind is susceptible of the strongest impressions, the young are regularly brought into personal intercourse with their minister, and accustomed to receive their instruction from his lips, they will naturally imbibe a respect for his person and a reverence for the sacred character of his office, which will

prove the strongest of barriers against immorality and vice, as well as dissent and infidelity. They will regard with deep veneration the truths which they have received upon his authority, and will feel the danger, no less of *guilt* than of error, in deserting the appointed guide of their youth for intrusive and unknown teachers."

XIX.

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

"Exercised from a child in all points of virtue."

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

Ps. xxxiv. 11. *2 Macc.* xv. 12. *Ps.* cxliv. 12.

In dwelling upon this part of our theme, the appointments of the Church for the welfare of the young, we are called upon to notice further the Church Catechism,—“That form of sound words, Scripture, or strictly Scriptural, the work of men giants in intellect and saints in piety,—so concise that a young child may learn it by heart, and yet so copious as to contain all things necessary to salvation.”

The work of instructing children in the Cate-

chism would not be left entirely to the Sunday school or the public catechising, it is a matter to be faithfully attended to at home. The duty of seeing that the child learn all things which a Christian ought to know and believe, rest primarily upon the parents.

One who has had many years' experience, as a parish priest, in 'feeding the lambs,' speaks on this subject as follows :

"As early as possible, a complete elementary system of doctrine and practice should be committed by the child to memory. Our Church furnishes such a system in the Catechism. This should be taught each of our children so soon as they are able to learn it, and long before they can understand it all. Let it be stored up in the memory, and as the understanding developes, it will receive its meaning.

"As the powers unfold, and are capable of sin, this body of truth will be there to chasten and guide them. It will be there with the commandments, to rebuke and forbid transgression ; it will be there with its directions to repent and to love and obey God ; there to encourage by His promises, and to remind of the solemn vows which have been made before God."

XX.

"The entrance of Thy Words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

"From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me."

Ps. cxix. 130. *II. Tim.* iii. 15. *John*, v. 39.

It is by no means implied by the preceding remarks that the Catechism, Scriptural as it is, can take the place of lessons drawn directly from the fountain-head, the Word of Truth.

"Excellent as the Catechism is," says Bishop Doane, "and prominent as it should be in every plan of instruction, it should always be impressed on the mind of every child that it is nothing, and of no regard, but as it may be proved by Scripture.

"While, therefore, its venerable text should be continually repeated, analyzed, enlarged on, illustrated, laid to the heart, applied to all the life, it should be constantly required that every line and word of it be shown to have authority in Holy Scripture.

"Used in this way, the Catechism explains the Bible, and the Bible sustains the Catechism.

The plan of salvation is developed ; the doctrines of the Cross are explained ; the duties of life are enforced ; of the whole counsel of God nothing is kept back ; of all that appertains to life and godliness, nothing is left obscure. The young Christian drinks conviction from the first fountains of eternal truth, and finds, with lively satisfaction, that every word which has been taught him by the Church has precedent and sanction in the pure Word of God."

These excellent observations, of course, must apply in their fulness to older children, yet their spirit is to be observed with children of all ages. Either as "milk for babes," or "strong meat for the young men," nothing can take the place of the inspired Word.

XXI.

"The young children ask bread."

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."

"Order my steps in Thy Word : and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

Lam. iv. 4. Ps. cxix. 9, 133.

Our young children, then, no less than ourselves, need to be fed daily with the Word of God. Let it be our aim and earnest endeavor

that they may, day by day, receive a portion of this heavenly manna, and that they may learn to "esteem it more than their necessary food," yea, that it may be "sweeter than honey to their taste." We know with what interest a mere babe will listen to the touching narratives of the Bible, and this should be but a foretaste of the increasing pleasure and profit which should result from "searching the Scriptures," with every added year.

To accomplish this, to make the study of the sacred page an ever new delight, no pains should be spared on the part of parents. Bible pictures, and works of reference illustrating and explaining the Scriptures, are very desirable helps, and should always be on hand when attainable; yet we are not to rely too much upon these, but rather upon the help of that Spirit Who alone can open our eyes that we may see the excellent things of His law.

Let earnest effort be used to prevent a dull and listless reading of the Bible, or the committing of its holy precepts to memory as a wearisome task.

A sensible writer remarks: "We cannot dep-

recate too severely the practice of giving portions of Scripture to be learned as a *punishment*, than which, it would seem, no surer way could be contrived of giving a child a distaste for the sacred Word."

Let us seek to accustom our children to a reference to the Word of God as the rule of their daily life, that it may be indeed "a lamp to their feet and a light unto their path." It has been well observed that "one of the most effective methods of instructing children in any duty, is to direct their attention to some interesting Scriptural example of the performance of that duty." Surely, also, we can in no way give such force to an admonition, or a requirement, as by an appeal to the perfect law of God.

XXII.

"Those that seek Me early shall find Me."

"While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of . . . his father."

"Thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father . . . if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee."

Prov. viii. 17. II. Chr. xxxiv. 3. I. Chr. xxviii. 9.

In bringing our little ones to the Lord, the next step, when they have received the idea of His existence, is to teach them to come to Him

by prayer—the prayer of faith ; having learned to “believe that He is,” they must believe that “He is the rewarder of all who diligently seek Him.”

None but a sceptic would turn from the thought of teaching a little child to pray ; often and often, indeed, has the weak faith of adults been reproved by the trusting, upward look of a mere babe, as he lisped his simple, earnest petition.

“Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try.”

We should be most earnest in our efforts to teach children the meaning of the petitions they are instructed to offer, that they may pray with the understanding,” as well as in our intercessions for them, that they may “pray with the Spirit.”

Carefully impress upon them a sense of the sin of drawing near unto God with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him ; teach them the attitude of reverence, and especially let them see by our manner, as we summon them to the duty, that it is a solemn thing to address the God of Heaven.

Each Christian child should have, as soon as old enough, a manual of private devotion, suited to his capacity, and be encouraged in its regular use. We need not fear inducing formality by this means; the child, as well as the adult, will find it an aid in devotion; while at the same time he may be taught that it is right and proper to give utterance to the peculiar wants and desires of each day in his own simple words.

XXIII.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me."

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

II. Cor. xiii. 5. Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. I. Cor. xi. 31.

A habit of self-examination we consider necessary to the maintenance of a close walk with God, in the mature Christian; as then the "babe in Christ" should have each feature of the "perfect man in Christ," although as yet infantile in proportions, and imperfectly developed, it seems a duty to cultivate this habit in our little ones.

We cannot, indeed, set a young child down to the task of introspection; the very idea of such a thing is unnatural, and provokes a smile.

But the mother who accustoms her children, as before urged, to pass their daily conduct in review, in the light of God's Word; and who leads them to pronounce the judgment of their own conscience, thus enlightened, upon their childish faults and follies, takes the best means to habituate them to call themselves to account, and to "know themselves."

Such a habit, if formed, must prove a powerful check to the thoughtlessness and excitability of childhood and early youth.

XXIV.

"Love the truth."

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."

"The lip of truth shall be established forever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment."

Zech. viii. 19. Col. iii. 9. Prov. xii. 19.

Foremost among the "moral virtues," as they are called, must be placed a love of truth.

Let this be cultivated in our children with most watchful and prayerful effort, for it lies at

the foundation of a pure, upright, and noble character.

It need hardly be added for our conviction, yet we may well be reminded, that to accomplish this result we must ourselves set before our little ones an example of undeviating truthfulness.

The slightest carelessness in this regard, on our part, will be sure to affect them, by lessening their sense of the heinous guilt and evil of falsehood. We should therefore most scrupulously avoid all exaggeration, misstatement of facts, and indiscreet promises or assertions.

And if, from hastiness or inadvertence, we are betrayed into any such inaccuracies, it is plainly our duty to correct ourselves; not hesitating, from any false notion of dignity, to give our little ones so marked a lesson on the value of truth and candor.

By example, as well as by precept, let us seek to form our children to habits of strict truthfulness, not in words alone, but in action; in the excitement of play or of aroused feeling, as well as in calmer moments. This will require much careful attention to childish prattle, much patience and watchfulness.

The parent must listen to the little narrator as he gives his account of passing events, and guide him to a careful and accurate statement; must lend an ear when the voice is raised in excited tones, and gently check any tendency to exaggeration or false coloring; and must be especially careful not to put any stumbling-block in his way that shall be the means of turning him aside from the path of truthfulness.

We cannot doubt that many children have been led into habits of prevarication and concealment, if not into downright falsehood, by a dread of the severity and undue anger of parents or guardians.

In order to "remove" from our children "the way of lying" effectually, by God's grace, we must encourage them to confide in us, and to be always ready to acknowledge the truth with regard to any childish error or delinquency.

They must learn, as they can only learn from experience of a wise, gentle, and discriminating parental discipline, that "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

XXV.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law."

"By love serve one another."

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Rom. xiii. 10. *Gal.* v. 13. *Rom.* xii. 15.

The love which is the fulfilling of the law, the charity which is the greatest of Christian virtues, as it is a prominent feature of every symmetrical Christian character, must largely claim our thoughts and efforts as we seek to mould the dispositions of our children.

We speak of natural amiability, of generous impulses, too much as if these were not within the scope of culture, and the contrary defects were matters of regret, but beyond the reach of our efforts to subdue. On the contrary, Christian charity, in all its phases, is to be constantly and carefully inculcated as an important branch of Christian nurture.

The sources of that open-handed benevolence, whose streams sometimes gladden and refresh the desolate places of the Church and the world, might, without doubt, be generally traced to the quiet nursery, where, in response to a mother's persuading tones, the tempting delicacy was

freely shared with a little companion, the treasured coin yielded to the claims of destitution, or the simple prayer offered, with a tear of feeling, for the suffering and distressed.

In the words of another, "Lisping infancy should be taught the law of kindness with its speech, and offices of sympathy with its tottering steps. Each unfeeling thought or word should be checked almost before it is uttered.

"There is a proneness to excite the sensibilities of children without any practical bearings, just for the gratification of admiring their beautiful and unsophisticated expressions of feeling. This is worse than useless ; the heart should prompt to *action*.

"Children should be taught to joy in others' joy, and thus widen their moral pleasure-grounds. It is true that God alone can impart the heavenly principle of love ; but should the blessing not come in immediate answer to the prayers of Christian parents, still should the child be taught to go in the way of duty, and, if it may be so expressed, tread with its little footprints a channel in which streams of Divine love may yet flow."

XXVI.

"This is My commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you."

"Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

John, xv. 12. *I. Pet.* iii. 8. *Eph.* iv. 32.

How truly "love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness," are "the fruits of the Spirit" alone, and do not grow in the natural heart, is witnessed in every phase of human life. In the nursery and the school, among babes of the same family, are seen in miniature the quarrels and bickerings which, when fully developed, hinder the peace of the Church and the State.

But none the less, nay, rather, *far more* earnestly, because these things are natural, will the Christian mother watch, and pray, and strive, that her little flock may learn to "be all of one mind," to "live in peace," that "the God of love and peace may be with" them.

In this connection we may especially notice the Apostle's injunction, *Be courteous*. We gain much toward a genuine kindness of heart, if we can train children to exercise the same courtesy

in their behavior at home and among themselves which is expected of them among strangers.

For this reason children should be required to treat elder brothers and sisters, and other members of the family, with a proper degree of deference, and they should never be allowed in any rudeness toward servants and dependents.

A more difficult point is to "see that none render evil for evil, or railing for railing," to teach them to "forgive as they would be forgiven."

Oh, let us labor to impress upon our little ones that in these things "Satan desireth to have them," that herein lies their temptation, here is the warfare they are to wage as enlisted soldiers of the Prince of Peace!

Happy the mother who can perceive the growth of her children in that wisdom which is "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits!"

XXVII.

"Without preferring one before another; doing nothing by partiality."

"His brethren envied him."

"Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

I. Tim. v. 21. *Gen.* xxxvii. 11. *James*, iii. 16.

"His brethren envied him." Often have the sad consequences of this state of feeling in the family of the patriarch been held up as a warning to the young against the indulgence of envious and unkind feelings; but may not parents also learn an important lesson from the connected story?

It is plain that the fact that Israel loved Joseph above all his children was evident to the less favored sons, and was the moving cause of their envious and malicious conduct.

Parents should know no difference in their regard for the children whom God has made equal claimants upon their love and care; and if, from any peculiar circumstances, they are conscious of a stronger degree of affection for any one child, they should be most cautious and solicitous not to betray this partiality in any way.

It is indeed our duty to study the character and temperament of each child, and to adapt our mode of management and discipline to the peculiarities of each. But while the treatment of the children of a family may thus necessarily

be varied in many respects, it should be apparent to all that the same love, and regard for their best interests, prompts each differing course.

The sight which has sometimes been beheld, of one beautiful, or otherwise gifted, child revelling in the love and caresses for which another neglected little one pines and yearns in vain, is one to fill the heart with pity and indignation, and surely cannot be witnessed where the parents have any claim to Christian principle and feeling. But some may unawares be guilty of the same error in a less degree, and we cannot be too scrupulous to avoid making any distinction, by our words or conduct, which may occasion any sensitive unhappiness, any degree of envy or jealousy, among our little flock.

XXVIII.

"If by any means I may provoke to emulation,"

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory ; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

"Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another."

Rom. xi. 14. Phil. ii. 3. Gal. v. 26.

The question naturally arises here, whether it

is right and wise to make use of the principle of emulation in the training of the young.

Many parents and teachers take the ground that it is unsafe to propose it as a motive to action, for that it naturally leads to "envy and strife," and thus opens the door to "confusion and every evil work."

Such will refrain from offering prizes or rewards of a nature inviting competition.

Yet we know that, especially in a large school, this incentive often proves a valuable and efficient aid in arousing the indolent and careless, and encouraging the diligent.

Doubtless, if employed at all, it should be with observant care, as in the handling of an edged tool.

It is well and advisable to provoke to a right kind of emulation—a desire to attain to the standpoint of the best and foremost; but unless it can be done without leading to vainglory, or invidious comparisons, it were better to do without its aid.

XXIX.

"Charity seeketh not her own."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

I. Cor. xiii. 5. Phil. ii. 4. Matt. xxii. 39.

The same holy charity which "suffereth long and is kind," which "envieth not," it is also said "seeketh not her own."

This unselfish spirit, that it may be developed in the influential man or woman, as has been before urged, must be fostered in the child; and yet, how often we witness a very contrary course in the training of children.

The petted and darling child cannot but see that he is the central object of the attentions of the household, that his wishes are paramount, that he is not expected to sacrifice any item of his convenience or pleasure for the comfort of others. How can he be otherwise than selfish?

Can it be expected that children thus accustomed from infancy to "seek their own," will easily learn to "seek the things which are Jesus Christ's?" Is this the training for a follower of the self-denying Son of God?

If our children are to be good for anything in life, even in a worldly point of view, much more, if we desire them to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ," we must early accustom them to practise self-denial.

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth"—the yoke of Christ's self-denying service. And in saying this, we do not plead for the abridgment of childhood's natural joys and privileges, or for presenting a gloomy view of religion to the young.

The happiest children are they who learn to give up their own will and pleasure for the good of others, and for the service of their God and Saviour.

XXX.

"Blessed are the pure in heart."

"Unto the pure all things are pure."

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? . . . He that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

Matt. v. 8. *Tit.* i. 15. *Psa.* xxiv. 3, 4.

It may be thought that the subject of moral purity is one which hardly concerns the training of young children; and, indeed, few mothers are aware of the perils which may surround their children in this respect. Many seem to suppose that if, as they advance toward maturi-

ty, they can be preserved from evil influence, nothing more can be needful. But sad experience has shown that in regard to this, as well as other features of the moral being, the moulding should be early begun.

And it need scarcely be added that this moulding requires the most delicate and careful touches. Attempts have sometimes been made to guard children from danger by disclosing to them the revolting details of vice; but this is a most injudicious and dangerous experiment. The safest course is to cultivate by a silent influence, habits of modesty and purity, and to teach in the plainest manner that all impure thoughts, words, and actions are in a high degree displeasing to a pure and holy God.

Of all safeguards to the youthful mind, next to the recollection of the All-Seeing Eye, there is none so effectual as the habit of confiding in parents. Let us seek to render our children unwilling to receive any communications, from companions or from books, or to entertain any thought, which they would blush to have revealed to a parent's eye.

XXXI.

"This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

"In all labor there is profit."

"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work."

II. Thess. iii. 10. Prov. xiv. 23. Ec. xx. 9.

We should endeavor early to imbue our children with the feeling that they have a work to do in the world, "a little spot of the vineyard to occupy"; and we should strive to form in them habits of industry, and a love of useful employment.

Whether the parents be wealthy or otherwise, to bring up children in idleness and helpless dependence is an inexcusable error. No one can be above that injunction of the Catechism: "to learn and labor truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me"; the child of affluence, as well as the child of poverty, should be taught the earnest meaning of these words, and that the lesson may be impressed upon them, each should be required to put it in practice.

"Let little ones be accustomed," says a sensi-

ble author, "at as early an age as possible, to steady and serious work, of a kind and in a measure suited to their powers; let them be taught the necessity and advantages of application, and thus led into habits of self-reliance and self-command."

There is a prevalent theory in these days that all effort required of children should be made as amusing and as little distasteful as possible; that they are to be beguiled with the idea that work is play. To this may be ascribed the many diluted, milk-and-water text-books for children, and short roads to learning. We have no faith in this system, and do not hesitate to lay to its charge much of the indolence, the dislike to active exertion, physical or mental, which we witness among our young people. Far better to teach the child to brace himself up to effort to *work* while he works.

By these remarks we would by no means be understood to justify the burdening of children with tasks beyond their years and strength. By far the larger portion of time, during infancy and early childhood, we would have children free as the young lambs, to sport at will; yet as

rational creatures, born to serve their Creator, let them become accustomed to do and accomplish something each day as their duty, their allotted task, whereby they may please the Master; and let them be encouraged in patient industry and effort by the thought that they are thus "serving the Lord."

XXXII.

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it."

"The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell."

"The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit."

I. Cor. iii. 2. Cant. ii. 13. Luke i. 80.

There is a species of exertion to which very young children are often urged and encouraged, which, far from being commended as beneficial, cannot be too strongly deprecated; we refer to intellectual effort.

Many parents are strangely inconsistent here. The very persons who would shrink from imposing tasks of any other nature upon their delicately-nurtured little ones, will be found stimulating them to an amount of mental labor far beyond their years and strength, and much

more injurious than even the same degree of physical effort could have been.

It is, indeed, very amusing and interesting to observe the precocious development of intellect which will sometimes result from such a course ; and, no doubt, it is often gratifying to parental vanity to hear expressions of astonishment from friends and acquaintance at the quickness of apprehension or powers of memory displayed by some mere babe, perhaps of three to five years of age ; but this pleasure is in general very dearly purchased. The development of the whole nature, in its due proportions, as we have before remarked, is the true meaning and significance of *education*; and this should be the aim of every parent. But it is impossible to secure the wholesome and entire growth of a child, where there is an undue expansion of any one set of faculties.

Few parents would be willing to hazard the serious injury of a child for their own personal gratification ; and if any are pursuing the course just described, with the expectation of benefiting the little one by thus prematurely drawing out its mental powers, let them be assured the

idea is a mistaken one. Let them remember that the young mind is in a young body, and not "forget wisdom in teaching knowledge."

Habits of application, of patient and industrious effort, such as will be of real use in a future course of mental discipline and culture, can be much more safely induced by such a method as we have urged under the last heading. We believe this will prove a far better preparation of the young mind for implanting the seeds of a thorough education than the exhaustion of the soil by an unnaturally early crop of infant knowledge.

XXXIII.

"There is a time to laugh."

"The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; . . . but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Eccl. iii. 4. *Zech.* viii. 5. *Eccl.* xi. 9.

As before remarked, a large portion of time during early childhood must properly and necessarily be given to active sports and other diversions.

The above texts recognize this fact; while

the concluding warning in the one last quoted may serve to remind us that during these hours of play the formative process—the moulding of character—must be going on, and therefore, that over these the watchful parental oversight should be extended ; not, by any means, to check or restrain childish gayety, but to guard against unwholesome influences, to win confidence by sympathy with the enjoyments of the child, and to prompt to such amusements as are safe, innocent, and improving.

A common form of diversion, with the generality of children, is self-employment in such occupations as are most congenial to the natural bent of the mind. The tastes and gifts of a child may often be best discerned by watching him in his hours of pastime, noticing what amusements he spontaneously chooses.

By observing and pondering upon these indications, parents may be greatly aided in giving a right direction to the efforts of their children as they advance toward maturity, drawing out and encouraging native talent, which, under the hands of unobservant and unreflecting parents, might have been repressed and discouraged.

The selection of toys for children is a matter in which a great want of judgment is often displayed. A profusion of frail and finical baubles will sometimes be lavished upon a little one, which amuse by their novelty for a brief hour, and are then thrown aside or wantonly destroyed. A few playthings judiciously selected will afford children more genuine pleasure, and may be made conducive to their real improvement.

XXXIV.

“Serving divers lusts and pleasures.”

“Spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.

“Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy.”

Titus, iii. 3. *Acts*, xvii. 21. *Eccl.* ii. 10.

A question nearly connected with our last theme, which may well claim a thought in passing, is, how far the training of childhood may be at fault in fostering an undue love of excitement and novelty.

No doubt this passion is inherent in our nature, and therefore, within proper limits and restraint, it must be innocent and subservient to our welfare. But evidently, in the case of many per-

sons, it is excessive, and is the cause of most pernicious results.

On considering this matter we shall find that the management of children is often erroneous in this regard, and that this error may, in many cases, be traced to the nursery. A judicious writer upon the care of young children remarks :

“ It is necessary to give infants proper bodily exercise, because they have not strength themselves to take it ; but they can *amuse themselves*, with very little help, at an early age, and always do so when in health, unless prevented by the officiousness of those around them.

“ I consider this a point of importance, not only because self-diversion constitutes the only kind of mental exertion they are capable of using, but also because, whilst the organs of sensation are so delicate, continual efforts made to arouse and stimulate infants are more frequently productive of pernicious consequences to the intellect, temper, and health of the child, than is suspected.

“ An infant is taught to look for violent agitations, to be pleased with them, and to feel their

absence. Is not this a love of dissipation interwoven with the earliest habits? In the next stage of childhood abundance of toys and a succession of playfellows become necessary to his amusement, and it is well if, in after years, his powers of mind do not become more and more dependent on the impulse of sensible objects, and averse to those of an abstract and intellectual nature."

XXXV.

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time."

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

"O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches."

Ecc. iii. 11. Ps. cxi. 2. Ps. civ. 24.

Of all sources of amusement, the purest, most lasting, and satisfying are those furnished by our Creator in the beautiful things of nature.

There is no danger in the joyous, wholesome excitement which springs from observing the wonderful works of God.

The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done His marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance. Then let us teach our children to admire and love the blossoms of the field, the

music of the birds, the countless beauties spread on every hand. Let them make friends with birds, insects, and other creatures of God, and learn their habits and trace their wonderful instincts. If possible, let them have a spot of ground to cultivate as their own. No one would grudge this appropriation who has ever witnessed the rapture with which each springing blade and opening bud is hailed by the young gardener.

The advantages of a home in the country are obvious in this connection; but parents living in the city will do well to expend both money and effort to procure for their little ones frequently a taste of such simple, natural delights.

In this view may be seen the importance of giving prominent place to the natural sciences in a Christian education, endeavoring so to impart a knowledge of them that it may be indeed a "handmaid of religion," leading the youthful student more fervently to adore Him who "hath done all things well."

XXXVI.

"When my children were about me."

"Even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her

young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings."

Job, xxix. 5. *Matt.* xxiii. 37. *Deut.* xxxii. 11.

The thoughts thus far suggested in pursuance of our momentous subject, and the passages of Scripture which have been adduced, must have strengthened the conviction in every candid mind that the safest place for a child is under the parent's eye.

Parents are directly responsible in their own persons for the nurture of the children committed to them. They may, indeed, avail themselves of the assistance of suitable helpers in their arduous work, but they cannot delegate the responsibility, nor throw off the solemn charge which rests primarily and principally upon them.

With regard to the earlier years of childhood, an able writer has beautifully observed :

"The highest and godliest nurture is that which keeps the children still beside the parents during the earlier years of life, in the fresh, formative time when there are beginnings of things that will never end. When the little birds are in the nest, the parent birds are seldom far or long away. The human instinct prompt-

ing to love and care and nourishment ought to be as strong. It usually is so for a while, but, in many cases, *only* for a while. Many things arise to interrupt the continuity and impair the energy of parental presence, and influence by that presence.

“It is God’s way that the children, while young, should be about the parents. That was the way in the olden time: happily it has been the way down all through time. It has ripened the richest fruits of goodness in human character. It has made the noblest men and women.

“Still will it be found, in all but exceptional cases, that *home*, be it tent of the desert or house of the city, and daily presence of father and mother, be they of high or low degree, are more for the child than any other person or things that can be substituted. They are great days for after meaning and far-off power and influence—the days ‘when our children are about us.’”

XXXVII.

“With whom hast thou left those few sheep?”

“The hireling . . . careth not for the sheep.”

“Hast thou children? Instruct them.”

I. Sam. xvii. 28. *John*, x. 13. *Ecclus.* vii. 23.

Let us, therefore, as parents, resolve to keep

our children as much as possible in our own presence,—under our own watchful eyes. Let us never be content to banish them to a lonely nursery, to consign them to the hands of an ignorant and, it may be, a heartless and unprincipled assistant, or to suffer them to wander forth, seeking and finding such companions as they may.

It is true their childish ways, their endless questionings, their demands upon our attention, are fatiguing, and interfere often with cherished plans and pursuits; but what claims upon our time and strength and patience, are so sacred as theirs?

Let it be our care and business to know where they are, and what they are doing. There is, indeed, a species of nervous maternal solicitude which is often held up to ridicule, and the wish is sometimes uttered that its little victims might enjoy “a little wholesome *letting alone*.”

But while it is true that care and thought for our children may betray itself in a wrong, and even foolish manner,—while it is true, also, that we are in danger of forgetting, with regard to our little ones no less than to ourselves, the

peaceful trust with which we are warranted in confiding our all to a Father's hands, let us not fail to remember that the watchful oversight of our children is our solemn duty.

XXXVIII.

"Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers."

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

"I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

I. Cor. iv. 15. Prov. i. 8. Prov. iv. 3, 4, 7.

It is often the case that parents who are most devoted to the care of their children during infancy, seem to feel themselves relieved, in great measure, from responsibility, when they arrive at an age to be sent to school.

But surely this is a great mistake. None, so well as intelligent and watchful parents, can superintend the education of their children, for none else can so well understand the temperament and peculiarities of each, upon the study of which successful training must so largely depend.

With regard to the education of daughters,

many are ready to concede that, if possible, it should be conducted at home, or as nearly as may be, under the eye of a watchful mother.

To pass over other considerations, there are branches of female education, most necessary to future happiness and usefulness, which must be in great measure neglected, under the usual system of schools.

But many who would seek earnestly to retain their daughters beneath the paternal roof, seem to judge differently with regard to sons; and boys are often removed, at far too early an age, from the influences of home and from the oversight of their natural guardians.

But who can have so much interest in the education of children as their parents? Surely we should not be in haste to commit to the hands, perhaps, of entire strangers, the sacred work for which we are responsible to society and to God.

"Let those," says a reverend writer, "who have a true Christian home, with the means of literary and religious instruction therein, not be banished from it so long as it is possible to retain them in it.

“Even through the collegiate and professional course, if it be possible, let the young have their nightly and Sunday rest at home, to find there, at the family altar, strength against the temptations which wreck so many in their educational career.

“Let the distance from the old hive to the new be as short as possible, lest there be loss and ruin in the swarming.”

XXXIX.

“Their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod.”

“Their spot is not the spot of His children.”

“Where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? . . . God understandeth the way thereof; . . . and unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

Neh. xiii. 24. *Deut.* xxxii. 5. *Job*, xxviii. 12, 23-28.

However we may appreciate the advantages of a home education, it must still be the case that but comparatively few families can command the entire instruction of their children under their own roof; and indeed it must be admitted that when children are past the tenderer years of infancy, a well-ordered school possesses some advantages which cannot be as

well secured by any other system. It becomes, then, a point of the utmost importance to know well the character of the schools to which our children are consigned; this cannot and ought not to be a matter of indifference to parents, even when the children are absent from their care but a few hours of the day; how much more need of prayerful caution is there when it is deemed expedient and necessary to send them away from home.

In either case, it is the bounden duty of parents to see to it, that although removed from close parental oversight, they be not exposed to unnecessary temptations; and especially they should provide that they be not sent out of the fold—that they be not taken from under the sheltering wing of the Church.

Yet, alas! what culpable carelessness is often witnessed in this respect. How often are children recklessly intrusted, for the sake of mere intellectual advantage, or worldly accomplishments, to the hands of those whose influence is either wholly irreligious, or tending, strongly though insidiously, to pervert their minds from the truths of their most holy faith.

To quote again from the Report of the Committee on Christian Education :

“It is most clearly and imperatively the duty of parents and guardians, to their children and wards, as well as to the Church, when they send the sons and daughters of the Church away from their homes, to send them to her own schools and colleges; not to those where her worship and teaching are unknown, and least of all to those in which Romanism so stealthily but surely perverts the faith of so many of the children of unreflecting or faithless parents.”

With regard to day-schools, a parish clergyman has well remarked :

“We believe there is scarcely a parish where it would not be found practicable to have a parish school—a school for the daily instruction of children in all needful studies in connection with the Church and its services, and under the watchful influences of the pastor.

“It is not practicable for the clergy to sustain such schools *unaided* ; but with the hearty coöperation of the laymen, it can be done. It is no new scheme, but proved for generations in the English Church, and its excellence confessed

by all ; but not carried out among ourselves more fully, because we are not awake to the responsibility of keeping the next generation for Christ."

XL.

"Give attendance to reading."

"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies. . . And further, by these, my son, be admonished."

"Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine."

I. Tim. iv. 13. *Ecc.* xii. 11, 12. *I. Tim.* iv. 6.

If the choice of companions, and of instructors for the young, be a matter of deep concern, how, it may well be asked, shall any regard with indifference those silent companions and educators which have access to the minds and hearts of our children in their most quiet and thoughtful hours?

Parents are too apt to be careless in this respect; to congratulate themselves that their children are well occupied, and out of harm's way, when they are seen with a book in hand, without troubling themselves to inquire the character of the influence which may thus be powerfully working upon the pliant and unguarded mind.

Surely this is a point where the utmost vigilance should be exercised by a conscientious parent or guardian. For, as has been truly observed, "One of the most prolific sources of mischief and peril to the young is undoubtedly the quantity of godless and immoral books with which the land is flooded. Here is an avenue by which Satan too often gains free, because subtle and silent, access to the youthful mind; implanting therein the seeds of evil, too surely to spring up as tares among the good seed of holy truth."

Even in works from which the taint of gross vice and immorality is excluded, it is often the case that a semi-infidel tone—an utter ignoring of Christian truth—renders them most unfit and unprofitable reading for our children.

It is plainly our duty, not only to be vigilant in guarding our youthful charge from the corrupting influences of an unsanctified literature, but to endeavor to provide for them wholesome and instructive, as well as attractive, books and periodicals, as a most needful part of family Christian culture.

In these days of cheap reading, we may de-

pend upon it, the young mind will feed upon something: if suitable reading be not supplied, from proper sources, the enemy will see that the void be filled.

Let us be thankful that the same prodigal press which throws temptation so freely around on every hand, enables also every one who cares duly for these things to provide, in good measure, wholesome, intellectual food for his family. Good books and papers are, almost without exception, within reach of all.

XLI.

"And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not."

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; . . . and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

Ezek. xxxiii. 32. II. Tim. iv. 3, 4. Cant. ii. 15.

These texts may suggest to us a caution, with regard to works of fiction, which form so large a part of the reading provided for little ones, as well as for all ages, in these days.

We are far from objecting to a proper use of these. Our Saviour spoke to the ignorant and

unlearned in parables ; and all experience proves that in no way can we more effectually arrest the attention of a child, for good, than by some simple story, conveying a moral or religious lesson.

We regard well-selected story-books as excellent helps in providing for the innocent amusement and occupation of the young. At the same time, there is danger lest our children learn to read merely for diversion and the excitement of the story, and thus acquire a distaste for anything which demands patient attention, or serious thought ; above all, lest the study of the Sacred Word thus become irksome and unpalatable. Too much of this luxurious reading, as we may term it, like any other luxury, must prove enervating and injurious.

This matter, therefore, demands our care ; to check the tendency to " skip " those portions of a book which speak forth " the words of truth and soberness," and to teach the youthful reader to seek for more than the amusement of a passing hour in the books which so delight him.

XLII.

"Thy children like olive plants round about thy table."

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."

"Tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought."

Ps. cxxviii. 3. Deut. xxxii. 2. Ex. x. 2.

There is one mode of education which, from being in the olden time the chief and most prominent of means used, has become of late quite too much neglected. In former days the young gained their information, in great measure, sitting at the feet of their elders, drinking in wisdom from the experience of age.

Then, children gathering with their older friends around the social board, or the winter-evening fireside, were wont to find them at leisure to respond to their inquiries, and thus impart pleasing instruction. But in these busy, stirring times, parents and seniors are apt to be so preoccupied in mind, so absorbed in their many active plans, as to have little time or patience for this method of improving their young companions. Too frequently is it the case that the hours of family reunion, few enough at the

best, are spent by the elders in the taciturn perusal of the daily news, or perhaps in discoursing of business among themselves, while the children are kept in constrained silence.

Says a wise writer: "Children will learn with pleasure from the lips of parents, what they deem it drudgery to study in books; and even if they have the misfortune to be deprived of educational advantages which they desire, they cannot fail to grow up intelligent if they enjoy in childhood and youth the privilege of listening daily to the conversation of intelligent people. Let parents, then, talk much and talk well at home. One who is habitually silent in his own house may be in many respects a wise man, but he is not wise in his silence."

Even those parents, fathers especially, who are necessarily separated from their families during much of the day are usually with them at meals, and let such reflect how many hours of the year are thus spent,—what an amount of precious opportunity for the cultivation of "the olive plants about our table"! As Dr. Guthrie well observes: "In the Christian household there is not a place nor a time which witnesses

more unconscious progress made in their Father's business, than the family table and the daily meal; in the un-christian household, or the merely nominal Christian table, there is no place or time where that work is more thwarted and hindered."

XLIII.

"In meekness instructing."

"The heart of the righteous studieth to answer."

"Be ready always to give an answer with meekness."

II. Tim. ii. 25. *Prov.* xv. 28. *I. Pet.* iii. 15.

The "endless questionings" of children are proverbial, and, while often amusing to their seniors, it will sometimes be the case that these reachings-out of the young mind, after things unknown and unexplored, will be wearying, and tempt an impatient word or frown. "Do not," says one, "thus roughly crush the springing spirit of inquiry, nor attempt, on the other hand, a long and instructive reply to every casual question. Seek, rather, to deepen their curiosity. Convert, if possible, the careless question into a profound and earnest inquiry."

The writer of an article in the *Christian Observer* thus alludes to a common fault with parents and teachers: "When a question is

asked which they cannot answer, they will profess to be busy, to turn the subject to avoid saying, 'I do not know.' If such parents and instructors would deal truthfully and transparently with those on whose minds their own are leaving an hourly impression, the acknowledgment of ignorance would be the means of winning for themselves respect and confidence, while it conveyed to their children a lesson alike of humility and encouragement.

"Still more," he continues, "will this principle apply, if we pass from ignorance to *infirmity*. We mistake if we think that superiority of age, station, or intellect, forms a screen thick enough to conceal from the keen eyes of children our peculiar weaknesses and faults. It should be apparent that we feel within ourselves, lament, and struggle with, that same corruption of heart, the branchings out of which we are called upon to prune in others.

"When we have done wrong, there is a manner of acknowledging it without loss of authority, which will gain from our children and others the fullest confidence in a justice so even-handed, that it is administered at our own expense."

XLIV.

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Jam. iv. 4. *I. John*, ii. 15, 17.

"Ye are a peculiar people." "Come out from among them and be ye separate." If we attach any meaning to such passages as these, if any to the baptismal vow, surely it must be conceded that a household which is truly devoted to the Lord, by this vow, must be peculiar, different in many respects from the families of the world around;—"It must do and leave undone, possess and give away, seek and renounce, enjoy and deny itself, according to this rule."

And, as in other things, so, also, will such a household differ from the world in the nurture of its children. They must be withheld from some things which the world approves as expedient or harmless, they must be trained in some practices which the world derides; otherwise may never be fulfilled in them "the will of God, even their sanctification."

It is often difficult, at the present day, to "discern between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not" in this matter of compliance with the world and its customs.

We charitably hope that, at the family altar and in the closet of the parents, these little ones are day by day consecrated to God, and that the secret influences of their home may be on the Lord's side; but should there not be some mark of distinction visible to the outward world?

And can a child be indulged in an early taste of the follies and gayeties most prized in worldly society, without acquiring that "love of the world" against which we are so earnestly warned?

There must be a dividing line somewhere. Let us, then, consider seriously and candidly whether such and such a course in the training of our children will not tend directly to bring them into contact with a gay and godless world and expose them to its perils. And if, in regard to any point, our conscience tells us that such will probably be the result, let us faithfully withdraw them from such influences.

In so doing we may be derided as puritanical,

and behind the age ; but is it not better to be on the safe side ? And need those who have the Lord for their portion seek after any doubtful pleasures and indulgences of the world which passeth away ?

XLV.

“ Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.”

“ He assayed to go ; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these ; for I have not proved them.”

“ I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

Eph. vi. 13. *I. Sam.* xvii. 39. *John*, xvii. 15.

While endeavoring to rear our children in such a manner as to expose them as little as possible to the allurements of the world, we are to remember, on the other hand, that the temptations of this evil world will surely be brought to bear upon them as they advance toward maturity ; yes, and it may be that the parents who would watch and warn them may then be far away or silent in the grave.

How shall we prepare them to stand firm in the evil day ?

Not by shutting them off from all sight and sound of evil, by striving to keep them in igno-

rance of the ways of the world upon which they may so soon be thrown, but by diligently arming them at all points against its machinations with the whole armor of God.

This subject will come home to the heart of every parent whose children are verging upon the period of responsibility, or are preparing even now to go out into the world.

Our children may appear well, their conduct may have given us much encouragement while under the restraints of a religious household, and controlled by our authority, but how will they act, as they must soon do, for themselves?

Let us anticipate this period by training our children from the first to a sense of their personal accountability to God. We cannot fail to notice the excellent tendency of our Church catechism in this regard. A child who has been well trained in its words and spirit, cannot but feel himself *individually* a member of Christ's holy Church, and personally bound by all the commandments of God.

And, even in matters not necessarily involving religious principle, let us seek to form our children to a habit of self-direction; that they

may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

It is well, sometimes, to withdraw the props, and leave the child where he must act upon his own responsibility, in some matter which will put his judgment or firmness to the test.

Then by kindly pointing out in what respects he may have failed to act wisely, a most valuable lesson will be given.

XLVI.

“Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

“Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.”

“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.”

Prov. iii. 17. *Ps.* cxlix. 2. *Ps.* cxviii. 15.

In the midst of the deep and intense anxieties with which, from the standpoint of experience and responsibility, we regard our children, there may be danger lest the shadows of our grave cares fall too darkly upon their young life; lest we fail to present the bright side of our holy religion to their observation.

If we would win our children to walk with us in the way to Zion, we should let them see that we can “be glad and rejoice in the Lord,”

yea also, that we can be "merry and joyful." While we seek to accustom them to Christ's yoke, let us endeavor that they may feel that "His yoke is easy, and His burden light."

"It seems to me," says one, "a great secret of religious domestic government, to make both children and servants feel that, though they might be more wicked in other households, they could not be more happy."

Through the years of earlier childhood, the evil effects of a morose, unsocial, ungenial home atmosphere, may not be so apparent; the light-heartedness of infancy, unless checked by actual harshness, will assert itself, and find its own simple joys; and, moreover, young children can be, with comparative ease, restrained within the limits of the home, however gloomy.

But as the child advances into the period of youth, with its vague ambitions, its eager and restless longings, how important it is that home should be "the dearest spot on earth" to him—that it should be invested with a charm which shall overbalance all attractions of a doubtful tendency abroad.

Let us seek, then, to invest the home circle

with all the attractions which we can command ; and especially with that which is within the means of the poorest parents—a genial sympathy with the joyousness of youth.

In this connection we see the advantage of what are generally termed “accomplishments.”

Let a taste for the fine arts be cultivated in children, *not* in order that they may attract the admiration of strangers, or shine in society, but that they may add to the innocent enjoyments of their home.

We plead especially for music—one of the purest sources of pleasure which this world affords. Few families are so situated as to be debarred from this advantage and delight, for most can command the opportunity, with a little pains, of cultivating the voice and ear, so as to enable children to join in the praises of God in His sanctuary, and to gladden their homes with sweet melody.

In view of retaining our influence over our children as they grow up, mothers may see the mistake of allowing themselves to grow rusty in intellect, and of burying the talents and accom-

plishments of their youth beneath an accumulation of cares, as is too often done.

As has been well remarked, "They forget that though they are mothers of infants now, they will be mothers of men and women by and by."

We do not mean to imply that the mother who has been prevented from keeping pace with the intellectual development of her children, thereby loses her claim to their reverence and obedience. That claim, as the child should have learned with the earliest lessons of his infancy, is founded upon the law and will of God; and this authority with which God has invested her, when combined with true piety, will always command the affectionate respect of her children.

But the wise mother will gladly avail herself of any helps within her reach, to strengthen her influence with her sons and daughters at the most critical period of their life.

XLVII.

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child."

"Till we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the

measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ : that we henceforth be no more children."

Mark, iv. 28. *I. Cor.* xiii. 11. *Eph.* iv. 13-14.

"We often do greatly err in looking for signs of grace in a young child which can be expected only in the mature Christian. We might as well expect the wisdom and vigor of manhood in the babe, and cast it out of human relationships and hope because they were wanting. The rule seems to be that, as natural endowments in the child or youth are to those of the man, so will gracious gifts and attainments at the same age be to those of the mature Christian.

"It is reasonable and Scriptural to expect that growth and development in the natural and spiritual should be analogous from infancy to old age.

"Yet many think to find in the young child the perfect man in Christ Jesus, and judge that there has been no saving work of grace in the soul if they are disappointed.

"Parents are often the severest judges of the piety of their children. They see all their petty offences, their frolic and levity, and are not, perhaps, although they should be, the confidants of

their more serious moments, and so judge harshly. How does their own conduct stand the scrutiny of young eyes always fixed upon them, and quick to see? Is not the religion of the parent full of inconsistencies, and are those of childhood more censurable? Let us judge charitably of the child Christian, separating that which is wilfully sinful from that which is natural and pardonable, and not reckoning as sin what is no more sin than sportiveness in the lamb. Even St. Paul has uttered a caution where it would seem to be least needed, when he says, 'Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged.' "

XLVIII.

"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?"

"My son, give me thine heart."

"Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them."

Jer. iii. 4. Prov. xxiii. 26. Matt. xviii. 2.

"With regard to the early confession of Christ in confirmation and at the Lord's table, where a desire for these privileges is manifested by children, and habits of prayer and conscientiousness are believed to exist, it is taking much upon us

to discourage them, and it may be like the breaking of the fruit-buds—a preventing of fruit for that season, at least, if not forever.

“We are not necessarily to expect any marked religious change in children religiously dedicated to God in baptism, and virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life. There will be, indeed, with such, seasons of deepened interest, and clearer and more spiritual experiences will be revealed to the soul from time to time under the teachings of the Spirit, so that the truths well known in theory shall work down into the heart and be realized experimentally, just as school knowledge becomes practical and clear in the advance to manhood; yet the process will not be by sudden changes, but in this, like his Divine Lord, the Christian child will increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

“A new creation of the soul by the Holy Spirit all need, whether of religious or ungodly households, for all are by nature dead in sin, and the children of wrath; but in the Christian child the work is as in the grain sown, while in the conversion of the ungodly it is like the engraft-

ing of the good tree on a wild stock, more easily traced in its operations and beginnings. The jailor at Philippi, and John the Baptist and Timothy are examples of the two cases—the one brought to God by a marked change, the others sanctified from the birth, and knowing from childhood the saving power of God's Word.

“When charity can find any indications of a hopeful nature there should be encouragement given to an early confession of Christ.

“Let not the young be hindered from those ordinances of strengthening and refreshing to which they are clearly privileged to come, and which they early need to enable them to fight the good fight of faith in the warfare of life.”

XLIX.

“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.”

“Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child.”

“Son, go work to-day in my vineyard,”

Prov. xx. 11. I. Sam. ii. 18. Matt. xxi. 28.

Let us seek to habituate our children early to laboring for Christ. Let them feel that a place is given them in the household of faith, in the ranks of God's elect, not merely that their own

souls shall be saved, but that they may be faithful and active "soldiers and servants."

And let them know that the Master whom they are sworn to serve has work in His vineyard for each and all; yes, and that He smiles upon and blesses the feeblest, humblest efforts in His cause.

Most important is it that a Christian family should be well informed concerning the great fields of Christian effort.

Where the missionary spirit pervades a household, where the parents and older members are intelligently and actively interested in all matters pertaining to the kingdom of God, it can hardly fail that the children will be imbued with the same spirit and recognize their vocation as Christian laborers.

L.

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

"He said, O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses."

"He that is obedient unto the Lord shall be a comfort unto his mother."

Isa. vi. 8. *Ex.* iv. 13-14. *Ecclus.* iii. 6.

It is, we fear, too often the case that the idea

of dedication of children entertained by parents is vague and unreal, dealing with generalities rather than with the special sacrifices to which they may be called in their own family circle.

Hence it is that parental unwillingness is sometimes a check upon the ardor of youthful devotion when it would engage in works which might demand sacrifices of time, strength, or worldly advantage.

And do we not find here one great reason why there are so few to "come up to the help of the Lord" by filling up the ranks of the sacred ministry?

In these days, when the Church has such imperative need of more clergy, when the fields are confessedly "white unto the harvest," when we are urged to "pray unto the Lord that He will send more laborers into His harvest," how is it that the sons of the Church seem to be given to every other business and profession more readily than to this?

Oh, if Christian parents, looking around upon the band of little ones lent them by the Lord, had at heart the solemn question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have these to do?" would not many

a bright, intelligent child be early set apart and consecrated to this glorious work by the desires and prayers of his parents ?

Of one thing we may be solemnly assured,—that when the conviction is brought home to our minds of a child's peculiar fitness or providential call to this or any other sphere of religious duty, we shall gain nothing to ourselves, even in earthly comfort, by withholding or dissuading him therefrom.

“He that is obedient to the Lord,” and he only, shall be a comfort to his mother. And the more truly and entirely the lives of our children are devoted to the Lord, the more will they be our earthly solace and delight—the deeper, purer joy may we anticipate when gathered with them into the rest of the people of God.

SECTION VI.

Seasons of Peril and Trial.

Seasons of Peril and Trial.

“From darkness here, and dreariness,
We ask not full repose;
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial-hour of woes.”

IN ANTICIPATION.

I.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear.”

“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.”

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.”

Ps. xli. 1, 2. *Ps.* lvii. 1. *Ps.* lvi. 3.

A manual for mothers could scarcely be deemed complete which should contain no special allusion to those periods of peculiar anxiety, trial, and suffering which are implied in the very idea of maternity.

We touch first upon the period of expectation, as having needs of its own, no less than the actual hour of trial. The dread of approaching evil, often increased by present physical weakness or mental depression, combined with a

consciousness of the importance of an even, quiet, cheerfulness of mind, render this a time when we have especial cause to lay hold upon the promises.

Let us thank God that the Bible is full of such promises. Especially is this true of the precious Book of Psalms, with regard to which an old divine thus challenges: "Let there be any grief or disease incident to the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not, in this treasure-house, a present, comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."

We can scarcely open upon a page of the Psalter without meeting some cheering word of encouragement which seems to have been inscribed there for our individual and present need; and to the anxious and depressed in spirit we would say, have the Psalter frequently open before you, and its holy words of prayer, faith, and hope much upon your lips and in your heart, as the surest means of preserving a calm and trustful frame.

II.

"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

“Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.”

“The people that do know their God shall be strong.”

Nahum, i. 7. *Ps.* xxxi. 24. *Dan.* xi. 32.

To a young Christian friend—a daughter in the faith—the Rev. H. Venn thus writes:

“. . . . I enjoy the privilege of presenting you before our most merciful and gracious God as one of His elect, as the purchase of His own blood, and as a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. I think of the approaching hour of your weakness, and feel for you. But I am comforted in the covenant engagements of your Saviour, whose power is infinite, and the tenderness of His love equal to that power. He will inspire you with meekness and fortitude.

“True friendship ever proves itself in the hour of adversity by rising in its warmth and by exerting every nerve in proportion as its aid is wanted. With the beloved and the friend of the daughters of Jerusalem, this is ever the case. Experience, from the beginning, has confirmed it. The Church of Christ has always had reason to say, and triumphed in the assurance, ‘I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor

things present, nor things to come, etc., shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

"'Be therefore of good cheer,' saith the Lord. 'Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid when promises, and oaths, and love Divine, and angels, and the Holy Trinity, are all engaged and all united for thy help, and for thy salvation—all engaged to preserve thee, and to make thee an everlasting monument of grace?'

"Oh, my dear friend! how solid, how all-sufficient, how certain the support and consolation, in every time of difficulty and distress, as soon and in the measure our Lord sees good for the soul!"

III.

"He hath done all things well."

"Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

"The woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved . . . if they continue *in faith* and charity and holiness."

Mark, vii. 37. *Luke*, i. 45. *I. Tim.* ii. 14, 15.

The peculiar trials incident to the estate of a true wife and mother may sometimes try the faith, even of an humble and sincere believer, and tempt such an one to exclaim, Can it be that

these things are ordained in love, by a merciful Father, who "knoweth our frame"?

The semi-infidel spirit of the world returns a negative to this suggestion of the enemy; nay, it proceeds further in these days, and openly sneers at the appointed lot and duty of woman, as set forth in the Word of God. Many even of our own sex, alas! are found advocating, without disguise, the avoidance of the weakness and suffering attendant upon the maternal function, in order that woman may the better maintain what these reformers are pleased to consider her true position in society.

It is a delicate and painful task to allude to these increasingly-prevalent opinions, and to the criminality which they encourage; but when the consequences are so patent as to cause the note of alarm to be sounded, not only by the watchman upon Zion's walls, but also by the patriot, is it not time that Christian matrons should set their face against these ungodly and demoralizing sentiments?

Let us beware of the insidious arguments which would pervert the conscience or render us dissatisfied with the Scriptural view of the

sphere and duty of woman, as illustrated by the examples of holy matrons of old, and as recognized by the Church, in her teaching and ordinances.

The gay worldling may glance with pity and contempt at a life regulated by such principles, but what is that to one whom angels and the Lord of angels approve?

And when we are tempted to murmuring and bitterness of spirit in view of the burdens or trials allotted to us—when we cry, with one of old, “Why am I thus?”—let us, with her, humbly “inquire of the Lord,” and we shall find submissive peace restored by the assurance, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” “Only believe.”

The woes of the curse pronounced upon our race at the fall are seen,

“By the light of Christian lore,”

to be turned into blessings, through the tender mercy of our God, in Christ. This is assuredly true of woman’s peculiar portion, no less than of the penalty of labor, and of death itself. And it shall be proved, to our eternal joy, when,

after meekly doing and suffering all that is appointed us, we enter at last, through much tribulation, the kingdom of God.

IV.

"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands."

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion. . . . *Grant thee thy heart's desire*, and fulfil all thy mind."—*Prayer Book Version*.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

Ps. cxxxviii. 8. *Ps.* xx. 1, 2, 4. *Ps.* xlii. 5.

Compare with these passages Psalm cxxxix., and thou shalt be led to feel that the interests so dear to thee—the "yet imperfect" life so mysteriously linked with thine—are as truly the care of thy Heavenly Father as thine own. [*See also Isaiah*, xliv. 2, and xlv. 4.] Trust Him, that He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him. "He also will hear their cry, and will help them."

"Be still, my heart, these anxious cares
To thee are burdens, thorns, and snares;
They cast dishonor on thy Lord,
And contradict His gracious word.

“When first before His mercy-seat,
Thou didst to Him thy all commit,
He gave thee warrant from that hour,
To trust His wisdom, love, and power.

“Did ever trouble thee befall,
And He refuse to hear thy call?
And has He not His promise passed,
That thou shalt overcome at last?”

V.

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.”

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, . . . but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”

“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart wait, I say, on the Lord.”

Ps. lv. 22. *Isa.* xl. 29-31. *Ps.* xxvii. 14.

In such times of need and weakness, it seems more forcibly true than ever that

“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath.”

How could we bear the weight of dread and care which sometimes oppresses the spirit, if we could not “commit our way unto the Lord” in humble confidence and hope? Let us say, with the Psalmist, “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.”

- “ O Holy Saviour ! Friend unseen,
 Since on Thy arm Thou bid'st us lean,
 Help us throughout life's changing scene,
 By faith to cling to Thee.
- “ Though faith and hope are often tried,
 We ask not, need not, aught beside,
 So safe, so calm, so satisfied,
 The souls that cling to Thee.
- “ They fear not Satan nor the grave,
 They know Thee near, and strong to save.
 With Thee all danger they can brave,
 Because they cling to Thee.
- “ Blest is our lot, whate'er befall,
 What can affright, or who appall,
 Since, as our strength, our Rock, our all,
 Jesus, we cling to Thee ? ”

“ PASSING THROUGH THE WATERS.”

VI.

“ Save me, O God ; for the waters are come in unto my soul. . . . Hide not Thy face from Thy servant ; for I am in trouble : hear me speedily.”

“ Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. . . . I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope.”

“ I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.”

Ps. lxi. 1, 17. *Ps.* cxxx. 1, 2, 5. *Ps.* cxxi. 1.

- “ Dear Refuge of my weary soul,
 On Thee, when sorrows rise,
 On Thee, when waves of trouble roll,
 My fainting hope relies.”

VII.

"When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee . . . if thou turn to the Lord thy God, . . . He will not forsake thee."

"Forsake *me* not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me."

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."

Deut. iv. 30, 31. *Ps.* xxxviii. 21. *Isa.* xli. 10.

"Full of trembling expectation,
Feeling much, yet fearing more,
Mighty Lord of my salvation,
I Thy timely aid implore!
By Thy suffering, O be near me,
All my sufferings to sustain;
By Thy sorer griefs to cheer me,
By Thy more than mortal pain."

VIII.

"Their strength is to sit still. . . In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Isa. xxx. 7, 15. *Deut.* xxxiii. 27. *Ps.* xlvi. 10.

"O Lord my God! Do Thou Thy holy will,
I will lie still;
I will not stir, lest I forsake Thine arm,
And break the charm
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,
In perfect rest!"

IX.

"Be not Thou far from me, O Lord : O my strength,
haste Thee to help me."

"Attend unto my cry ; for I am brought very low."

"Hear me speedily, O Lord : my spirit faileth : hide not
Thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down
into the pit."

Ps. xxii. 19. *Ps.* cxlii. 6. *Ps.* cxliii. 7.

"Let this cup pass, my Father ! I am sinking
In the deep waters which surround my soul ;
And bitter grows the draught which I am drinking,
And higher rise the waves that round me roll.

"Forsake me not in this my need extremest ;
Let not Thy strengthening hand elude my grasp !
I *know* Thy love, even when Thou harshest seemest—
Father most merciful ! let this cup pass !"

X.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"Into Thine hand I commit my spirit : Thou hast re-
deemed me, O Lord God of truth. . . . My times are in Thy
hand."

Job, xiii. 15. *Ps.* xxxi. 5, 15.

"Pain's furnace heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow ;
And all my heart in anguish shivers,
And trembles at the fiery glow.
And yet I whisper, As God will !
And in His mighty hand hold still."

XI.

"My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me."

"The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me."

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Ps. lv. 4. *Job*, iii. 25. *Ps.* xxiii. 4.

"Jesus, my God, to Thee I fly!

Thou art my refuge ever nigh.

When heart shall fail, when life is past,

Thou wilt receive my soul at last."

XII.

"O spare me, that I may recover strength."

"Mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. . . . So wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live."

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Ps. xxxix. 13. *Isa.* xxxviii. 14, 16. *Ps.* xxvii. 13.

If there be ever a case in which it seems right to pray that life may be spared, surely the case of the faithful mother at this crisis is such. In the hour of extremest peril, though death seem very near, still may we ask this mercy of our God, "in whose hand our breath is." Yet strive to say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

RETROSPECTION.

XIII.

"The bitterness of death is past."

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

"Blessed be the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications. . . . My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped."

I. Sam. xv. 32. *Ps.* xxx. 5. *Ps.* xxviii. 6, 7.

"When trouble, like a gloomy cloud,
Has gathered thick, and thundered loud,
He near my soul has always stood ;
His loving kindness, O how good."

XIV.

"O what great troubles and adversities hast Thou showed me ! and yet didst thou turn and refresh me ; yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again. . . . Therefore will I praise Thee, and Thy faithfulness, O God !"

"In the day when I cried Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul."

"I will praise Thee forever, because Thou hast done it : and I will wait on Thy name ; for it is good before Thy saints."

Ps. lxxi. 18, 20 (*Prayer Book version*). *Ps.* cxxxviii. 3.

Ps. lii. 9.

"Sing, my soul, adore His name ;
Let His glory be thy theme ;
Praise Him, till He call thee home ;
Trust His love for all to come."

XV.

"Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord."

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

Ps. cxviii. 19. Ps. cxvi. 7-9.

It surely must be a first impulse of every right-minded person, on recovering from sickness or danger, to "praise the Lord in the midst of the congregation of His saints"; to "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise." For the woman delivered from her great peril our mother Church of England provides a special thanksgiving. This service is retained in our own Prayer Book, and it is much to be regretted that it has fallen into disuse among us, probably through the influence of peculiarities of feeling and custom in our country,—must we not say from the false ideas of delicacy which pervade our society?

But, though it may be doubted whether it were wise to combat this state of feeling at present, the service should be a reminder, to every true-hearted Christian mother, of the duty of

solemn and earnest thanksgiving for the peculiar mercy vouchsafed unto her.

As early as possible let her go up to the courts of the Lord,—in spirit at least, realizing the sacred poet's description:

“A spouse, with all a daughter's heart,
Fresh from the perilous birth,
To the Great Father lifts her pale, glad eye,
As a reviving flower when storms are hushed on
high.”

XVI.

“I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.”

“Come near and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of the Lord.”

“An offering of a free heart will I give Thee, and praise Thy name, O Lord; because it is so comfortable. For He hath delivered me out of all my trouble.”

Ps. cxvi. 17. II. *Chron.* xxix. 31. *Ps.* liv. 6, 7 (*Prayer Book version*).

The rubric at the close of the thanksgiving service alluded to enjoins that special thank-offerings be made by the person returning thanks. In this, as indeed in the whole office, the example of the Jewish Church is followed, and of that blessed mother who gladly offered from her poverty the gift which the law of the Lord required.

Surely such an expression of thankfulness will commend itself to every one as most seemly. The gratitude of a devout heart will naturally seek vent, not in words alone, but in deeds of love and devotion.

The object for these offerings is one which must be considered especially appropriate, when such cases exist in the neighborhood. But "the poor always we have with us," and suitable objects for our charity are ever to be found.

XVII.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

"I will go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise Thee O God my God!"

"I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me. . . . I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

Ps. cxvi. 12, 13. Ps. xliii. 4. Jonah, ii. 2, 9.

The Church further admonishes her faithful daughter, at this time of gladness and thanksgiving, that "If there be a Communion, it is convenient that she receive the Holy Communion."

Most "meet, right, and her bounden duty" is it, indeed, to embrace the first opportunity of remembering the Lord's mercies at His holy table.

As one well remarks, in comment upon this service, "Thus may she offer herself, in soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto God. This is the most solemn and acceptable way of praising Him for His mercies; and it is a means of surrendering to His service the life which He has so graciously spared.

"It is remarkable on how many occasions the Holy Communion comes in as the great means of dedicating ourselves to the Lord, and of seeking from Him that grace which we so much require, to enable us to live in His holy fear and love. Our Church expects us to receive it after our confirmation, as a sign of our membership; when a mother returns thanks, and also in the days of sickness, to cheer us in our gloom, and to strengthen us in our weakness. . . . It is an ordinance that we should ever be ready to receive, for the nourishing and comforting of our souls. It is never out of place, in the days of health or of sickness, in the time of joy, or in the hour of sadness."

"Within Thy courts, for Thy love's sake,
I'll call upon Thy name;
The sacramental cup I'll take,
And thus Thy grace proclaim.

“Now I am Thine, forever Thine,
Nor shall my purpose move ;
Thy hand hath loosed my bonds of pain,
And bound me with Thy love.”

XVIII.

“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it;
. . . pay that which thou hast vowed.”

“I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered,
and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.”

“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the
Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will
deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

Eccl. v. 4. *Ps.* lxvi. 13, 14. *Ps.* l. 14, 15.

In the seclusion and quiet of the sick chamber, and especially in times of peril, when we feel ourselves to be very near the grave, with what a different aspect do the plans and occupations of life pass in review before us!

Who has not been led, at such times, to look back with wonder and regret at many things in the past, and forward to the future with earnest resolutions of amendment, and with new and holy purposes of heart?

Yet how often, when restored to health and to the active duties of life, do these views and feelings pass away as the early dew; or, if recalled by memory, they are dismissed from the

thoughts as fancies of the sick bed, attributable to weakness, and as unworthy of the hours of vigor, and incompatible with the realities of life.

Alas! in many cases we must fear that it is the "still small voice" of conscience and of God which thus appeals to us in the quiet hours when we are withdrawn from the turmoil of the world, and which is silenced by the busy din of "earth's many voices," as we mingle again amid its stirring multitudes!

Let us be faithful with ourselves in this matter, and see to it that we be not negligent in striving to fulfil that which our souls have promised unto the Lord our God, when we were brought very near into His presence; or, be we well assured that the Lord will "require of us" these secret vows in the day of account; yea, it must be greatly to our spiritual loss and hindrance, if we do not earnestly seek to keep and perform them.

"What shall I render to my God
For all His kindness shown?
My feet shall visit Thine abode,
My songs address Thy throne.

“Among the saints who fill Thy house
My offerings shall be paid ;
There shall my zeal perform the vows
My soul in anguish made.”

SECTION VII.



Bereavement.

Bereavement.

“If thou shouldst call me to resign
What most I prize ; it ne’er was mine ;
I only yield Thee what is Thine :
Thy will be done !”

DEATH OF CHILDREN.

I.

“Where is he?”

“Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted, . . . because they were not.”

“If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

Job, xiv. 10. *Jer.* xxxi. 15. *Gen.* xliii. 14.

The death of young children is often spoken of as a trial more abounding in consolations than any we are called to meet in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears.

This we believe; and yet there is none which carries with it a keener and more desolate sense of bereavement, especially to the mother.

The time and thoughts of a true mother are so absorbed in the care of the precious ones committed to her—these are so much a part of her life—that when one is taken from her cher-

ishing arms, a void seems left which never can be filled.

The busy day that was all too short for maternal duties, how slowly pass its hours to the mother when

“Her little hindering thing is gone.”

She handles the little garments, the work of busy, happy hours, and weeps for the precious form which she may enrobe no more. She listens involuntarily for the patter of the tiny feet upon the floor—for the echo of the merry, caroling laugh—and shudders to think how they are stilled. She starts from her slumber at the imagined sound of

“That voice, which, though sleeping
A mother will hear;”

but the sight of the empty crib or cot awakes her to the consciousness that her darling needs her care no longer.

And then comes the wild longing—who that has lost a friend has not felt it?—to know more of that strange mysterious state into which the loved one has passed.

“Where is he?” The bright, loving spirit

which so lately animated the infant form, whose fondling caress we still feel, whose winsome tones are ringing in our ears; where is it? Does it not miss the sheltering mother arms which so yearn for it? Where in the vast regions of the spirit-land wanders the treasured one so cherished here?

But heaven-born faith hushes the yearning cry, and schools the aching heart to calm, submissive trust. Oh, how can partings such as these be borne, without the aid of the Christian's faith?

II.

"I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

"Carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."

Matt. xviii. 10. Heb. i. 14. Luke, xvi. 22.

The pleasing, comforting doctrine of guardian angels, by no means to be regarded as a Jewish fable, comes in with peculiar solace here.

Think of your little departed one as entering upon its new, mysterious state, not alone, but in the loving guardianship of that bright Spirit who, from its first moment of conscious exist-

ence, was commissioned by its Father in heaven to watch and protect it.

“The reapers are the angels.” This we know. And the cherished blossom of love which they have been commissioned to bear away from your home is but transplanted to the paradise where it shall bloom and expand, fed upon joys, and nurtured by love such as earth cannot know.

III.

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine.”

“Not one of them is forgotten before God.”

“The God in whose hand thy breath is,”

Ezek. xviii. 4. Luke, xii. 6. Dan. v. 23.

The anguish of bereavement is often deepened by harrowing reflections upon some attendant circumstances: “Had these been ordered differently,” it is thought, “the life of the beloved one might have been prolonged.”

Most frequently does this occur in the case of little ones,—too young to give expression to their suffering, or to describe their symptoms.

The tortured heart recalls indications—then, perhaps, little heeded, now so plain!—the mute glance, appealing for relief; the baby-utterances

of complaint, but half understood ; and moans, "Oh, if we could but have known !"

Let the mourner, anguished by such vain regrets, be calmed by the reflection that not a soul parts from the body but at the command of the Almighty.

The life which is His gift, He alone can recall.

"It is an unspeakable comfort to feel and know that neither we nor ours shall die without the decision and appointment of our Heavenly Father. Whatever the cause, or the means, the remedies used or left unused, when the breath leaves the body, it was God's appointed time for it to leave, and no created wisdom or power could hasten or stay it one moment.

"Life is too precious a thing, with too much dependent upon it, to be left, in its beginning or close, to any but Almighty power and wisdom.

"We read that 'the Lord struck the child' of David ; and we are told 'there is an appointed time for man upon the earth.'

"Up to the moment of decision it is ours to use the means of healing, and to fast and pray ;

but when God has taken the decision into His own hands, we have only meekly to say, 'The will of the Lord be done!'"

IV.

"Jesus called a little child unto Him."

"The Lord hath need of them."

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

Matt. xviii. 2. Matt. xxi. 3. Rev. xiv. 4.

"Infants glorify Him by their deaths." As they are created and redeemed, so, doubtless, are they thus early removed from earth, to glorify their Lord.

"Yea," saith the Lord, "have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

In these, the multitude of infant spirits, "redeemed from among men, without fault before the throne of God," He sees of the travail of His soul.

"He would have infant trebles ringing

The glories of the great I Am ;

He would have childish voices singing

The hallelujahs of the Lamb.

And shall we faint in grief's desire

Because this grace to us is given,

To have a babe amidst the choir

White-robed around the throne of Heaven?"

V.

"He shall gather the lambs with His arm."

"Go thy way ; thy son liveth."

"All live unto Him."

Isa. xl. 11. *John*, iv. 50. *Luke*, xx. 38.

"A babe in glory is a babe forever,
 Perfect as spirits, and able to pour forth
 Their glad heart in the tongues which angels use,
 These nurslings gathered in God's nursery
 Forever grow in loveliness and love,
 Yet cannot pass the limit that defines
 Their being.
 Innumerable flowers thus bloom and blush
 In Heaven. Nor reckon God's designs in them
 Frustrate, or shorn of full accomplishment.
 The lily is as perfect as the oak,
 The myrtle is as fragrant as the palm ;
 And Sharon's roses are as beautiful
 As Lebanon's majestic cedar crown."

VI.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

"Great shall be the peace of thy children."

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come."

Rev. xxi. 4. *Isa.* liv. 13. *Matt.* xix. 14.

"It is no small advantage," saith Bishop Taylor, "that our children dying young receive ; for their condition of a blessed immortality is ren-

dered to them secure, by being snatched from the dangers of an evil choice, and carried to their little cells of felicity, where they can weep no more.

“They are entered into a secure possession, to which they went with no other condition but that they passed into it through the way of mortality, and for a few months wore an uneasy garment.”

“God took thee in His mercy,
A lamb untasked, untried;
He fought the fight for thee,
He gained the victory,
And thou art sanctified.”

VII.

“Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.”

“There the wicked cease from troubling.”

“In the world ye shall have tribulation.”

II. *Kings*, iv. 26. *Job*, iii. 17. *John*, xvi. 33.

We cannot doubt that as “one star differeth from another star in glory,” so to him who fights the battle of life, faithful unto death,—“to him that overcometh,” shall be given a more glorious crown; and they shall enter upon a higher degree of blessedness, symbolized, in the words of the

Lord himself, by "the hidden manna," and the "white stone, in which is a new name written."

It is right submissively to wish and ask that our children may live to fight this good fight, and to finish nobly a Christian course.

But let us ever meekly add: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Who but He who seeth the end from the beginning, and knoweth the way that we must take, the snares and perils which shall encompass us, "the sin which may blight, and the sorrow which shall fade," the fair blossom of life so lovely and promising now; who but He can say that our beloved one shall stand the trial, and "come forth as gold"?

Do we shudder to contemplate the possibility of a different ending to the life so precious to us? Do we dare to ask for our child sorrow, suffering, and temptation that we know not of, and such as might appall us could we foresee it?

Then let us trust this life to Him who doth not afflict or grieve us willingly, but though He cause grief, in removing our precious ones out of our sight, does it in infinite mercy and compassion to us and to them.

VIII.

"Neither will I offer unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

"I have lost my children, and am desolate."

"There stood by the Cross of Jesus, his mother."

II. *Sam.* xxiv. 24. *Isa.* xlix. 21. *John*, xix. 25.

"God loveth a cheerful giver." Cheerfully, then, yield up at His call that which has cost thee so much, and is so dear in thy sight, though "a sword pierce through thine own soul" at the sacrifice.

And He will restore into thy bosom, in His own good time, an hundredfold the joy and comfort of which thou art now bereft.

"It is but a little while when this thin veil of clouds hanging in darkness betwixt us and that region of brightness, shall break away, and our God shall put to shame our weeping, giving us back our lost, clad in Heaven's own garb, and beaming in all the light and health of that happiness and glory in which they have been kept, and nursed, and nourished."

"Redeemer, I thank Thee

That children of mine,

As gems in Thy coronet

Ever shall shine.

Full reward for all suffering,
 All sorrow and pain,
 If in bliss everlasting
 I meet them again."

IX.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

"Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Matt. vi. 21. *Jer.* xxxi. 3. *John*, xiii. 7.

Through the infinite mercy of our God, the little ones early called have been, in regard to many a household, what the martyred innocents of Bethlehem were to the Church,—“First-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.”

Beautifully illustrative of these dealings of our All-Wise and Compassionate Guide, is the familiar parable of the Alpine shepherd with his sheep :

“They in the valley’s sheltering care
 Soon crop the meadow’s tender prime;
 And when the sod grows brown and bare,
 The shepherd strives to make them climb.

“But naught can lure the timid things
 The steep and rugged path to try,
 Though sweet the shepherd calls and sings,
 And seared below the pastures lie.

“ Till in his arms their lambs he takes
Along the dizzy verge to go,
When, heedless of the rifts and breaks,
They follow on o'er rock and snow.

“ And in those pastures lifted fair,
More dewy soft than lowland mead,
The shepherd drops his tender care,
And sheep and lambs together feed.”

So, when our hearts are too much wrapped in earth's poor joys, and we are forgetful of the better things in store for us above, does our Good Shepherd take and bear away from our sight some treasured object of our love, that we may more willingly heed His call, “Follow thou Me!”

Blessed be His name who gave, and who thus in mercy recalls His gift! Let it be ours so to make our calling and election sure, that our hearts may rest in the precious assurance concerning our little ones who have gone before,—“I shall go to Him, though He shall not return to me.”

X.

"I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke."

"She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks."

"The heart knoweth his own bitterness."

Ezek. xxiv. 16. Lam. i. 2. Prov. xiv. 10.

When the holiest and nearest of earthly ties is sundered by death, the stricken one seems for a time beyond the reach of earthly comforters.

As a stranger intermeddleth not with the dear and sacred joys of conjugal life, so the bereaved heart alone knoweth the bitterness of the separation; and friends shrink from intruding with words of consolation upon the one who "sitteth alone and keepeth silence" under the burden of such a grief.

Yet even for sorrow such as this there is "balm in Gilead," and "a physician there," who, with tenderest skill, can probe and mitigate the anguish of such a wound.

Nor will the suffering spirit refuse the touch of that gracious Hand, well knowing that "in all our affliction He is afflicted"; and that He, as no earthly friend, can be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities."

XI.

"The whole family in heaven and earth."

"Concerning them which are asleep, . . . sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

"I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, . . . nor things present, nor things to come, . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Eph. iii. 15. *I. Thess.* iv. 13. *Rom.* viii. 38, 39.

If the wedded pair were united in Christ, while there will be tender memories of the days when they took sweet counsel together, and walked to the House of God in company, yet, surely, "as sufferings abound, consolations will much more abound."

For the departed one is yet, in very truth, a member of the same household of God; though hidden from view, he is, as it were, but in another mansion of the same Father's House; rejoicing in the smile of the same loving Master; animated by the same blessed hope of His appearing, and of a glorious resurrection, as those who yet remain in this vale of tears.

What, indeed, shall separate those who are alike members of the body of Christ?

XII.

“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

“Unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness :
He is merciful, loving, and righteous.”

“Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.”

Gen. xviii. 25. *Psa.* cxii. 4 (*Psalter*). *Rev.* xv. 3.

When the anguished heart has no such comforting hope to cling to ; when, instead, all is doubt and gloom as to the present state of the beloved one, what bitter drops are mingled with the cup of woe !

Ah ! why do we not bethink ourselves, while yet there is time, of the hour when “one shall be taken and another left,” that it be not for an eternal parting !

The comfort which the mourner finds in such a case is well called “light in the darkness.”

Only by holding fast, as it were, to the horns of the altar, by stretching out the hand of faith, through the gloom, to lay hold of the right hand of everlasting righteousness, can calmness and peace return to the stricken soul.

XIII.

“Is any among you afflicted ? let him pray.”

“O Lord, my strength, . . . my refuge in the day of affliction.”

“Then David arose from the earth, . . . and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped.”

James, v. 13. *Jer.* xvi. 19. *II. Sam.* xii. 20.

From a sermon recently delivered, we are permitted to quote these words :

“In the case of David’s bereavement, it is good to see what devout and instant resignation was manifested by him.

“He did not, as some Christians have done, shut himself up at home, for weeks and months, on the plea that his grief was too great to bear going to the House of the Lord. Where should a believer go, in his affliction, and where find comfort, but in the House of God, in its prayers and sacraments ?

“And then David engaged at once in the duties of life, took his place again with his family, and ate as usual at his table.

“What a contrast with their conduct who immure themselves in the darkened room, requiring to be ministered unto, and suffering family cares and duties to go neglected, on the plea of great grief at their bereavement !

“And, with all this, there is a feeling that such manifestations of sorrow are commendable, and

that the absence of them would convince heartlessness.

“Is there no consolation in religion? Was Mary heartless because she stood beside the cross of her Son? Did the other women and the disciples prove themselves insensible to their great loss, because they came to anoint the sacred body, or met together for worship?

“Are there not often added duties demanding our attention, when death has entered our dwelling? and is not one great design of trial and affliction to make us more faithful in life’s duties?

“There is much passionate grief that is heathenish. Nature must indeed have its outbursts of tears; but grace will soon bring the afflicted one to go about in duties more earnestly, to come to God’s house more reverently, to show the blow, as the vine shows the pruning-knife, by a few drops, but also by greater faithfulness, and to treat the loss as the soldier does the fall of a comrade, closing up the ranks, and marching on more earnestly in life’s great battle.”

XIV.

“Let thy widows trust in Me.”

“He will establish the border of the widow.”

“He relieveth the fatherless and the widow.”

Jer. xlix. 11. Prov. xv. 25. Ps. cxlvi. 9.

In very many cases of widowhood there is added to the grief of bereavement, harassing perplexity and anxiety concerning the future maintenance of the family.

But the Word of God meets this most natural difficulty with special, full, and abundant promises to the widow and orphaned.

Not only does God himself espouse the cause of such bereaved ones, who trust in Him, but He many times enjoins upon His people, as a sacred duty, to remember the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to share with these His bounties, that their God may “bless them in all the work of their hands.”

The heart of the believing widow shall ever have cause to “sing for joy” at the gracious fulfilment of that word of promise which hath been her comfort in her affliction.

XV.

"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive."

"A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation."

"To them that have no might He increaseth strength."

Jer. xlix. 11. *Psa.* lxviii. 5. *Isa.* xl. 29.

Still heavier is the burden of care which presses upon the widowed mother, left the sole natural guardian of the little ones, for whose safe conduct along life's perilous way she feels herself sadly incompetent.

Often does the sigh of anxious solicitude escape her at some instance of youthful waywardness, which seems to demand a father's strong, restraining hand; and sorely does she miss the sympathy and counsel of one interested like herself in the well-being of her children.

But as in every perplexing path of duty, so above all in this, the Christian mother may with confidence seek unto the source of all strength and wisdom. Her fatherless children are children of the covenant, yea, of an especial covenant of mercy.

Let not the mother thus situated relax the reins of discipline from a sense of her own weak-

ness, for this were to doubt the help so freely promised.

And she has need to be especially on her guard lest an added tenderness toward those, like herself so deeply bereaved, do not betray her into an undue indulgence of their faults and follies, and make her blind to defects which will mar their Christian character and usefulness.

With new energy and faithfulness let her seek, by God's help, to supply to her children the loss they have sustained ; in the meekness of wisdom exerting all her influence, and the powers perhaps hitherto dormant, for their temporal and eternal well-being ; and the Father of the fatherless will smile upon and sustain her efforts.

XVI.

"The time is short : it remaineth that . . . they that weep, *be* as though they wept not."

"We should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope."

"That the trial of your faith . . . might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

I. Cor. vii. 29, 30. *Tit.* ii. 12, 13. *I. Pet.* i. 7.

Meet words are these to be much in the hearts, not only of the bereaved, but of those in the full tide of life's duties, joys, and temptations.

With them we will close this little book, humbly praying that the words of Heavenly wisdom which it has been our privilege to collate and dwell upon, may throw a gladdening light upon the path of many a Christian Mother.

FINIS.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 051 612 6

